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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY STUDIES IN ENGLISH
AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

ST. JEAN DE CRÈVECOEUR

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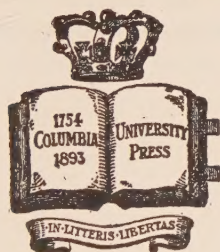
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ST. JEAN DE CRÈVECOEUR

BY
JULIA POST MITCHELL, PH.D.



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This Monograph has been approved by the Department of English and Comparative Literature in Columbia University as a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication.

A. H. THORNDIKE,
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TO
H. E. M.

PREFACE

AT the conclusion of this investigation into the facts of the life of St. Jean de Crèvecoeur it is a pleasure to recall the generosity of the historical and learned societies which have given me access to their collections, and to acknowledge the inspiration I have received from the advice and encouragement of individuals who have been kind enough to take an interest in this study.

To the library of Harvard University I owe the use of their copy of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* which is said to contain annotations in Crèvecoeur's own hand, and a long loan of their copy of the Paris biography before I was able to procure one of my own, and other courtesies too numerous to mention. I wish to thank the Massachusetts Historical Society for the opportunity of examining the Crèvecoeur letters in their possession and for the use of their files of early American newspapers; the Boston Public Library for allowing me to copy a letter from Crèvecoeur to Clinton and two letters written to his publisher, as well as for access to their collection of early periodical literature; the Boston Athenaeum and the Academy of Arts and Sciences for the pleasure of examining presentation copies of Crèvecoeur's book received by Washington and Governor Bowdoin; the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester for the use of their extensive files of New England newspapers and early magazines, and the Essex Institute library for files of early Salem papers. One of these papers in the latter part of 1787 announced the publication of a descriptive pamphlet in regard to the Ohio Company, which was said to contain "elegant extracts" from Crèvecoeur's

account of that territory. At the John Carter Brown library at Providence, this brochure came to light. At Providence I looked at the same time for material relating to the "Société Gallo-Américaine," in which I felt reasonably sure that Crèvecoeur must have had an interest. The search was unsuccessful, but since that time the library mentioned has purchased papers which throw light upon the origin of that society and of Crèvecoeur's connection with its foundation, which Mr. Franklin B. Sanborn has described before the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford was kind enough to permit me to examine their Trumbull and Wadsworth papers, to let me copy a Crèvecoeur letter from that collection and to allow me to use their files of the *Courrier* and of the *Courant*. The Buffalo Historical Society gave me access to their collection of early travels in America. The New York State Library at Albany allowed me to see their Clinton collection, and the New Jersey State Library at Trenton to consult land records and the proceedings of the legislature at the time when Crèvecoeur made his proposal on the part of the king of France to help in the establishment of a botanical garden in that state, and later when that garden was developed under André Michaux. To the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia I am indebted for permission to copy many Franklin and Crèvecoeur letters and several from Mme. d'Houdetôt, as well as an interesting manuscript containing a biographical sketch of Crèvecoeur by a fellow-member of that society; to the library of the University of Pennsylvania for the opportunity of examining their Franklin collection, and to the trustees of that university for the privilege of consulting their early minutes in regard to the gift of Louis XVI to their library during the period of Crèvecoeur's consulship, and to the Pennsylvania Historical Society for a copy

of a letter from Crèvecoeur to William Short and for the use of their files of Philadelphia newspapers covering the period of Crèvecoeur's activity. My thanks are also due the Society Library of New York and the New York Historical Society for the use of their newspaper files and for other courtesies. At the Lenox Library, now part of the New York Public Library system, I was permitted to copy a letter from Crèvecoeur to General Webb, and at that library I found among their newspaper files most of the important details in regard to the packet service which Crèvecoeur inaugurated. At the library of my own university I must acknowledge services received from many members of the staff, including the patient little pages who trudged and fetched untiringly.

A large number of Crèvecoeur letters were found in the Library of Congress among the papers of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, William Short and John Fitch, and generous permission was accorded me to make use of these. The largest, and in some respects the most interesting, collection of unpublished material in regard to Crèvecoeur was found in the library at Mantes. I am indebted to Monsieur E. Grave, the archivist of that town, for the labor of copying the many pages of that collection, which includes letters from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld and copies of other letters written by or to Crèvecoeur during the days of his consulship and forwarded to the Duke. The letters at Washington and these letters at Mantes which contain references to personal and intimate affairs, matters of scientific interest, details in regard to French-American commerce, questions of state policy and charming gossip, form the chief excuse for re-writing the life of Crèvecoeur, because they add greatly to an understanding of the significance of his services in behalf of the two countries toward which he felt so strong an affection.

A collection of Crèvecoeur papers remains in the possession of St. John's descendants who are living in Paris. As this was the point of departure from which Robert de Crèvecoeur wrote his excellent biography, the most important details in this collection have probably already seen the light. Others paper are to be found at Bordeaux in the possession of M. Cluzant. It is possible that material covering the first days of Crèvecoeur's consular service exist among the papers of the Seton family owned by Mr. Thomas Jevons of New York, since that collection contains letters written by William Seton to his mother during the months that Crèvecoeur spent with him after his arrival in this country in the autumn of 1783. It seems possible, too, that we may some time see Crèvecoeur's two letters to Samuel Breck written shortly after Shays' rebellion took place and earnestly recommending clemency toward the leaders of that outbreak. These letters are referred to in a sketch of Crèvecoeur now at the American Philosophical Society, written by Samuel Breck, junior, who was his fellow-passenger across the Atlantic in 1787. The Breck papers were kept together and were examined by Horace Scudder when he wrote his life of Samuel Breck, but the letters in question are not there noted. Several interesting letters between Crèvecoeur and Ethan Allen are reproduced in the pages of *Vermont, Governor and Council*; others may come to light later. Crèvecoeur's acquaintance with John Bartram the botanist went back to an early date. It is singular that no trace of it beyond a reference and the sketch of Bartram's garden in the eleventh "Letter" has yet appeared. From a connection of the Bartram family I learned that his papers had been given into the keeping of a certain society. Upon inquiry of this society I learned that they possessed no Bartram papers. There is probably some misunderstanding in this

matter. It is to be hoped that at some future date some further trace of this acquaintance may be found. It is probable that Crèvecoeur letters may exist among the Lafayette papers, for while Crèvecoeur was acting as consul he was in the habit of writing freely to the marquis, whom he profoundly admired, and he kept up relations with the family after his final return to France in 1790.

One of the most difficult periods of Crèvecoeur's life for his biographer is the ten years that ensued after his departure from France and his appearance in New York state in 1765, when he was naturalized under the laws of that province. I cannot own myself convinced by Robert de Crèvecoeur that his ancestor spent two of those years soldiering in New France, nor can I prove to my complete satisfaction that he did not do so. In connection with this part of the study I wish to express my appreciation of the kindness of Professor William B. Munro, of Harvard University, in obtaining copies for me through Dr. W. A. Doughty, Dominion Archivist, of papers relating to the question of identity which has been discussed in the second chapter of this book. My thanks are due also to M. Philéas Gagnon of Quebec, to M. P. Boucher de Crèvecoeur of the Fraser Institute Library at Montreal, and to Dr. N. E. Dionne of the Legislative Library at Quebec, for investigation in regard to the vexed question of the two Crèvecoeurs. M. Benjamin Sulte was good enough also to examine his voluminous notes on this period. Mr. Laurence J. Burpee of the Carnegie Library at Ottawa, whom I also consulted in regard to the Canadian episode, and Mr. Lee Phillips of the Library of Congress, have given me the benefit of their knowledge of map-making, and Mr. Burpee was kind enough to lend me a photograph of the map that Crèvecoeur copied from the one made by Peter Pond, the Canadian trader.

One of the pleasantest surprises in connection with this study of Crèvecoeur's life has been the finding of the site of his Orange County home. With the family of Mr. William R. Conklin of Chester, in whose possession the property formerly belonging to the American Farmer now lies, I enjoyed two very delightful visits. On the occasion of the last I had the pleasure of driving over a very considerable extent of the country round about Pine Hill and of making first-hand acquaintance with the country-side which Crèvecoeur has so enthusiastically described. I regret that I learned too late to see it that the original title-deed of the property was in the hands of Miss Mary Griggs, daughter of one of the former owners, whose home is not far from Chester. At Goshen one may see, in the County Clerk's office, copies of the deed of purchase and of the deed of sale, but they have not the interest of originals.

Dr. Morgan Dix, late rector of Trinity church, had certain of the old Trinity Corporation records investigated, at my request, and helped thereby to establish the correct date of Crèvecoeur's work as surveyor of their lands. Dr. J. H. McGean, rector of St. Peter's in Barclay Street, was kind enough, also, to search the parish records for some account of the marriage of Crèvecoeur's daughter, which took place in that church in 1790. Unfortunately that section of the record had been destroyed by fire. Search among the Seton papers for Crèvecoeur data was similarly unsuccessful, but I take this opportunity to acknowledge the kindness of Monsignor Robert Seton of Rome, and of Mr. Thomas Seton Jevons of New York, for their efforts in the matter, and also of M. Alcide Ebray, former consul from France, for searching the French consulate at New York for Crèvecoeur items. I am indebted to Professor A. H. Swaen of the University of Groningen for investigating the subject of Dutch editions of Crèvecoeur and for the

benefit of his judgment in regard to a doubtful bibliographical item. Mr. Henry Carey Baird of Philadelphia was good enough to investigate the edition of the Farmer's Letters credited to Mathew Carey in 1798. Mr. Stephen O. Todd of St. Johnsbury, Vermont (the town that was named in Crèvecoeur's honor), kindly sent me a series of papers which he published a few years ago in the St. Johnsbury *Caledonian* based on the Paris biography of Crèvecoeur. He is responsible also for many suggestions which have led to important discoveries, also for bringing to my notice work that had already been done in connection with the subject of this study. I owe many helpful suggestions to Professor John L. Gerig of Columbia University, to Professor J. Franklin Jameson of the Carnegie Institution, and to Mr. Gaillard Hunt, Chief of the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress. I wish to take this opportunity also to thank Mr. J. C. Fitzpatrick and Miss Emily Mitchell of that department for their assistance.

Mr. Franklin B. Sanborn of Concord has been a helpful adviser from the outset of this work. It has been a great pleasure to talk over with him, from time to time, the results of my search, and I have benefited by his encouragement and by his suggestions. Professor Edward Channing of Harvard and Professor Lois K. Mathews of the University of Wisconsin have read the chapter relating to the packet service. Professor Grace Hubbard of Barnard College has read the entire manuscript and made many suggestions. I am especially indebted to Professor William P. Trent of Columbia at whose suggestion the book was written, who read the manuscript and proofs, gave me advice at each stage of the investigation and kept up my courage when the work had to be abandoned more than once on account of illness.

It gives me pleasure, last of all, to acknowledge the courtesy of the Countess de Crèvecoeur, who showed me the inter-

esting portraits of Crèvecoeur and his children which are in her possession, and allowed me to see the material which was used by her husband in the biography so often referred to throughout these pages. It will always be a pleasure, also, to remember my meeting with the very little boy who does not yet know that he is the great, great, great grandson of Saint Jean de Crèvecoeur.

CANTON CHRISTIAN COLLEGE,
Canton, China,
March 15, 1915.

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CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

IT is now a little less than a hundred and thirty-five years since a modest-looking volume appeared in the window of a London bookseller, entitled *Letters from an American Farmer*, by "J. Hector St. John, a farmer in Pennsylvania." Although unfamiliar to many English and American readers of today, it was then widely read in both countries, passed into other lands in translation, and had a considerable influence upon the thought and action of men and women of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The moment of its appearance was timely, for in 1782, just one year before the close of the struggle between Great Britain and her American colonies, a book on America was likely to have a hearing, since the attention of the public was already directed toward the new world. In addition to this favoring circumstance, an interest in country life was gaining ground, due in part to the writings of Rousseau, so that this book with the savor of the soil in its title met the new fashion. Moreover, the book encountered the full tide of the romantic movement, with its interest in all that was bizarre and unusual, so that a description of a farmer's life written by a professed farmer was in itself well-suited to pique the curiosity of those who might fail to find interest in the political situation or agricultural matters there discussed. It is not impossible, too, that the resemblance between the title of St. John's book and John Dickenson's widely popular *Letters*

of a *Farmer in Pennsylvania*¹ may have served to arrest the attention of readers and that St. John may have hoped that it would do so. However this may be, the popularity of the book is sufficiently attested by the history of the translations that were made, by the testimony of the reviews and by references in other books of the time, as well as by the large number of reprints from it in magazines and gazettes of that day.²

The name "J. Hector St. John," which appears on the title-page, sounds curiously like a nom-de-plume, but it was not entirely such, for the form "Hector St. John" is found on more than one document relating to St. John's life in America before the time of the publication of his book. Indeed, if we accept the statement of the genealogist of the St. John family, (Orline St. John Alexander),³ Crèvecoeur, to use our Farmer's better-known name, was connected with the famous St. John family to which Bolingbroke belonged, and used their name by right. Yet, although he is entered on colonial records as "Hector St. John," the first name, at least, is pure invention, for his baptismal name was Michel-

¹ Dickenson's *Letters*, a series of political papers which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, beginning December 2, 1767, were reprinted in London in 1769 with a preface by Franklin, to whom they were sometimes attributed. They were soon after translated into French and much discussed in Paris salons. The similarity between the titles of the two books has led to confusion in more than one library.

² St. John's present-day readers have undoubtedly been increased since the publication in 1904 of a re-print of the 1793 edition of the *Letters* (Fox, Duffield & Co.). This with the preface by Prof. William P. Trent and the introduction by Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn, together with extended articles by Mr. S. O. Todd, of St. Johnsbury, and Mr. F. B. Sanborn, of Concord, based on the biography written by the great grandson of the Farmer (*St. John de Crèvecoeur, sa vie et ses ouvrages*, Paris, 1883) by Robert de Crèvecoeur, has called the attention of the public to the work of a man who was rapidly approaching oblivion.

³ *The St. John Genealogy*, N. Y., 1907, p. xiii.

Guillaume. What led this poet and enthusiast turned Yankee to adopt so valorous a name as Hector is hard to imagine. Those who assume that he is the same man as a young lieutenant named Crèvecoeur who fought under Montcalm in 1756-1758, believe that, when he came into the English colonies at the close of the war, he adopted the anglicized form of his family name of Saint-Jean as a precaution in order to conceal his part in the struggle, and took the name of Hector simply as part of the disguise which he felt to be advisable and which he further effected by altering certain leading facts of his life in the publication of the *Letters* in 1782.

Whatever the truth about his name, "Hector St. John" is a penetrating observer, though somewhat over-enthusiastic, perhaps, and the conditions of life in the new world can be studied with advantage as well as with pleasure in the pages of his book. For he is a thoughtful spectator, not content with merely presenting facts as they appear, but concerned with their causes. It was this characteristic, no doubt, that led such men as Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Franklin to appreciate him, while it was probably the charm of his style that won Hazlitt, Lamb and Lowell.

Crèvecoeur must not be identified solely, however, with this book, for it must be remembered that the *Letters* were translated into French and expanded until they reached three volumes, and that in his later years he published another book of equal length (*Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie et dans l'état de New York*, Paris, 1801). His services as consul from France to the United States during the decade following our Revolution must also be remembered. We owe to him, too, the establishment of the packet-service between France and the United States and in part at least the postal treaty between these two countries and the en-

franchisement of the port of Honfleur, with its significance for American manufactures and exports. To all practical and helpful ideas he listened with enthusiasm, and exerted his influence on behalf of their originators with tireless energy. Now it was John Fitch struggling to gain recognition for his steam-boat, and now it was the clever shipwright, John Peck. He was not a first discoverer himself, but by besieging the French ministry in his correspondence, by advocating new ideas in long memoirs and in the public press, and by prevailing upon his friends in season and out of season, he became the effective champion of the most beneficent conceptions of his time.

Yet, after due account is taken of Crèvecoeur's public services, one turns to his writings as the more tangible record of his personality, and after admitting the value of his later volumes, one is led inevitably by their charm back to the pages of the *American Farmer*. In that book is found again something of the grace and earnestness of John Woolman, his Quaker contemporary, whom he may have known and whose *Journal* it is easy to think he may have read, because of the strong prepossession in favor of the Quakers which Crèvecoeur's book shows, because of the form of the book — a record (like Woolman's) of travels throughout the colonies and of the impressions which these journeyings made upon him, because of its similar evidence of desire to be of use to its generation by its clearly expressed indignation against the evils of slavery. Both may claim to have produced a book that, because of the way of its telling, is interesting to another generation than that for which it was first intended — an achievement far from common in Colonial days.

The interest of the *Farmer's Letters*, however, lies not in its possible indebtedness to other men's work, but in its independent and clear-eyed setting-forth of the conditions

of life as they appeared to a practical, but at the same time idealistic, observer who saw things not only as they were, but as he wished they might be; one at whose hands, therefore, enthusiasm very naturally sometimes colored truth. Yet this idealistic element was not altogether due to naïveté, for he was a student before he was a farmer, and to his mind one of the most interesting and significant things about life in the American colonies was the answer it seemed to furnish to problems in political economy which European governments were trying in vain to solve. He is a political and social philosopher, although a modest one, illustrating his theories from American conditions, and not merely a garrulous apologist of American life. While the air is electric with the coming storm, these pages offer the last opportunity to study these conditions before they were shattered by the seven years of conflict and the "colonies" were no more.

A history of the family of Crèvecoeur with which St. John is connected would have to go back to the time of the Crusades, according to one of their descendants,⁴ who has records of the family from the twelfth century. One branch had its seat in Burgundy, the other at Crèvecoeur-en-Orge, in Normandy, where there is an ancient castle, built, according to tradition, by William the Conqueror, and presented to a Crèvecoeur by Richard the First.⁵ The subject of this study came into the Norman line through Nicolas Jean,⁶ sieur de Bellengreville, who acquired by marriage in 1660 (seventy-five years before St. John de Crèvecoeur

⁴ Mr. Charles Pryer, of New Rochelle, to whom I am indebted for some of the following statements.

⁵ See Robert de Crèvecoeur's *Saint John de Crèvecoeur, sa vie et ses ouvrages*, Paris, 1883, p. 289.

⁶ The father of Nicolas Jean, Robert Jean, sieur de Launay, was one of the courtiers of Marguerite de Valois in 1610 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 287).

was born), the fief of Crèvecœur in the parish of Blonville.⁷ The wife of Nicolas Jean was Jeanne d'Auge, daughter of Guillaume d'Auge, seigneur de Beaulieu and heir to Guillaume de Hérouval, seigneur de la Londe, Blonville and Crèvecœur. The first of the present line to bear the name of Crèvecœur was the son of this marriage, François Jean de Crèvecœur.⁸ François was a magistrate at Caen, as were his two eldest sons. The first died without issue; the second inherited the property and left it in turn to his only child, Marie, who married M. Cairon de la Varende, by whom it was sold in 1766 to the Marquis de Brunoy. The third son, Guillaume-Augustin Jean de Crèvecœur,⁹ called the "Marquis de Crèvecœur," was the father of "Hector St. John." St. John's father and St. John himself, at least after 1781, used the title of Crèvecœur although, as we see, the fief was never in their possession.¹⁰

Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecœur was born at Caen, in Normandy, January 31, 1735,¹¹ ¹² in the parish of St.

⁷ Arrondissement de Pont-l'Évêque.

⁸ 1665-1716.

⁹ 1707-1799.

¹⁰ It is the opinion of Mons. E. Grave, the archiviste of Mantes, that the division of the family to which St. John belonged, is that found in the neighborhood of Mantes, at Gillet and at Bréval. At least two Crèvecœurs, he notes, were governors in the 17th century of La Roche-Guyon, the seigneurie of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, near Mantes. In connection with this fact it should be observed that a considerable number of letters from St. John to the Duke are preserved in the library at Mantes.

¹¹ See the facsimile of the "acte de naissance" (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 284, reproduced here, p. 307, Appendix), where the name is given as "Michel-Jean-Guillaume." Robert de Crèvecœur explains that the patronymic was intercalated there by mistake between the two Christian names.

¹² Laïr, Weiss, Guyot de Fère and the many American biographers who follow them, give 1731; Vapereau has 1739. He is represented

Jean de Caen. His father's name appears as Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur on St. John's birth certificate, as Guillaume-Augustin de Crèvecoeur in the genealogical sketch in Robert de Crèvecoeur's book,¹³ and as Michel-Augustin Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur on St. John's "acte de décès" on the register at Sarcelles.¹⁴ His mother was Marie-Anne-Thérèse Blouet. The father is described by Robert de Crèvecoeur as a well-bred country-gentleman; his mother is said to have belonged to a family of birth and distinction, and to have received a better education than usually fell to the lot of women at that time.¹⁵ Their home at Pierrepont, near Caen, is described as patriarchal.¹⁶ Guillaume-Augustin was the first of his line for several generations who did not enter the magistracy at Caen; he preferred the simple life of his country-place, varied by residence in Caen during the winter months, and by occasional visits to Paris, where he kept up his acquaintance with various persons of influence who afterwards interested themselves in his son's career.

In this quiet community, not lacking in memorials of ancient times, St. John developed many of the traits which characterized him in later days. He spoke in his old age¹⁷ in the obituary notice of 1813 as dying at the age of eighty-two, which, although an error, serves to explain why so many of the earlier biographers give 1731 as the year of his birth. The notice of St. John's birth, recorded in the year of the occurrence, is more likely to be correct in the matter of the date than the notice of his death.

¹³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 288.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 286. See Appendix, p. 322.

¹⁵ The godfather from whom he received his first name was his mother's uncle, Michel-Jacques Blouet "seigneur et patron de Cahanolles, trésorier de France et général des finances de Caen." His godmother was the "noble dame" Anne de Bourges, his maternal grandmother (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 284).

¹⁶ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 2.

¹⁷ 1803, *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 5.

of the passionate interest he had as a child in old worm-eaten furniture, old tapestries and portraits, parchments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which he learned to decipher at an early age, and in all traces of the past which made old times live again. Later he enjoyed rambling through old grave-yards and reading their mossy inscriptions. He knew almost all the churches in the canton, he says, and whatever they contained that was interesting in the way of painting and carving. Sometimes he noted what he saw, and read his observations to his mother. In the *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie*,¹⁸ Crèvecoeur represents himself as talking to a friend about the necessity he felt while still a child for describing what he saw, and as reading to this friend by request an account which he had written when a young boy, of a castle near his home.¹⁹ These pages are as rhetorical as such a performance was likely to have been; there can not be much doubt, in fact, that they are from Crèvecoeur's juvenilia. In the *Farmer's Letters*²⁰ he appears to deride the vogue for studying antiquity, in making the "Minister,"²¹ say that people amuse themselves with very little profit in reviewing the ruins of temples and other buildings which have little affinity with those of the present age. He himself adds with energy that for his part he would rather admire the ample barn of one of their opulent farmers than study the dimensions of the temple of Ceres.²² It must be remembered, however, that Crèvecoeur is here speaking in the character of a practical colonist; he would probably not have expressed himself with so much vigor against the worship of antiquity, moreover, if he had not at one time been a worshipper himself.

¹⁸ 1801.

¹⁹ *Voyage*, I:210-229.

²⁰ See, too, in an earlier part of the same passage, p. 202, an eloquent description of the charm of old-time memorials expressed by his interlocutor.

²¹ *Letters*, ed. 1904, p. 6.

²² *Letters*, ed. 1904, p. 9.

Crèvecoeur was indebted to this quiet country life for his rather unusual power of observation of natural phenomena. Whether he is describing the coming of winter in the Mohawk Valley, or the habits of the wasps on his Orange County farm, the same eager interest in what he is telling can be seen. In a sketch of a trip to Niagara²³ he exclaims, "It has often been a matter of wonder to me that men do not pursue the study of nature more." This study is joined at times to moral reflections in the spirit of his age, but at other times he disregards the opportunity for edification which the eighteenth century generally suspected to lurk beneath all natural laws and manifestations, and merely chronicles, instead, with delightful simplicity, the happenings among the plants and animals on his farm.

Other influences of those early days which affected his after-career were found at his own hearth-side. Guillaume de Crèvecoeur, who was a man of some means, was said to have been careful of his interests, yet not without a regard for appearances. Remembering his son's success as a colonist in the new world, one wonders whether he did not inherit some of his father's natural sagacity, for in addition to being a good farmer, St. John was a fair man of business.²⁴ Robert de Crèvecoeur described St. John's mother, too, as "pleine de sens,"²⁵ so he evidently had something to gain in this respect from both sides. St. John may perhaps be congratulating himself on this point when he makes the "Minister" in the "Introductory Letter" say to the "Farmer," "Nature hath given you a tolerable share of

²³ *Magazine of American History*, October, 1878, p. 611.

²⁴ For confirmation of this point, consider his services in the management of the line of mail-steamers between France and the United States before the policy of extravagance, for which he was not responsible, blighted it. See, too, the terms under which he sold his Orange County farm upon his second return to France (Appendix, pp. 317-321)

²⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 4.

sense, and that is one of her best gifts, let me tell you.”²⁶ The rest of the characterization that follows is interesting because it includes some of the qualities which have already been suggested as belonging to St. John in his youth, and other qualities to which he had good claim.

“She [Nature] hath given you besides some perspicuity, which qualifies you to distinguish interesting objects; a warmth of imagination which enables you to think with quickness. . . . You have a tender and well-meaning heart, you love description, and your pencil, assure yourself, is not a bad one for the pencil of a farmer; it seems to be held without any labour.”

Little is known of Crèvecoeur's school-days beyond the fact that he was placed under the care of the Jesuits at the Collège du Mont in Caen while still very young. His memories of these years are rather sombre. In 1785 he wrote to his children referring to the “miserable garret” in which he was lodged at their age (they were then eleven, thirteen and fifteen), to the severity with which he was treated, and to the way he was fed and the way he was dressed.²⁷ It is hard to understand why the son of a family not lacking either in means or in influence should have been treated so harshly, but it is easy to see why, in consequence, he looked back to his school-days with such bitterness. One significant thing he adds with regard to them. From his dormitory windows at night, when the cold kept him awake, he learned to notice the north star, which was to be his guide upon many future wanderings. At the Collège du Mont, in spite of discomfort and harsh treatment, he made considerable progress in the study of mathematics, of which he seems to have had a somewhat surprising degree of practical knowledge at an early age, for he was a successful map-maker and surveyor by the time he was twenty.

²⁶ *Letters*, ed. 1904, p. 13.

²⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 4.

CHAPTER II

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

WHETHER Crèvecoeur's knowledge of surveying was gained entirely at the Jesuit school at Caen, or whether the foundations were laid there and his studies completed in England, is impossible to say. At the close of his school-days at Caen, probably in 1753 when he was eighteen years old,¹ he made a visit to Salisbury, where he lived for a time with two elderly maiden ladies named Mutel, relatives presumably of his uncle Jacques de Crèvecoeur whose wife was a Mutel. Not long after his arrival there, he became engaged to a young woman about whom nothing has been learned beyond the fact that she was the only daughter of a business man belonging to a family known to the Mutels, and that she died before their marriage could take place. This event was the cause of Crèvecoeur's sudden departure for America, which he reached about a year from the time of his arrival at Salisbury, that is in 1754.²

The next eight or nine years were spent chiefly in Pennsylvania (according to a document which will be discussed in the following paragraph), with headquarters at Philadelphia, where he acted as partner or agent of a man whose name and line of business are not known, but who was probably an acquaintance or connection of the Mutels. This business seems to have involved a good deal of journeying about on Crèvecoeur's part; it appears probable that he was engaged

¹ See Appendix, p. 314.

² *Ibid.*, note.

in trading with the Indians³ during some of this time at least. After dissolving relations with this associate, Crèvecoeur seems to have relied upon surveying for a livelihood.⁴ About 1764, he wrote⁵ to the Duke of Harcourt in 1787, he travelled through the region now known as Vermont. A little later he applied for naturalization papers in the province of New York and an act was passed, December 23, 1765,⁶ granting the privilege to him and eleven other foreigners at the same time, upon the payment of twenty-five shillings in fees to various officials. Crèvecoeur settled first in Ulster County,⁷ but later went into Orange County, and in December, 1769, became a land-owner by the purchase of one hundred and twenty acres on the border-line between the present towns of Blooming Grove and Chester. To this purchase he gave the name of "Pine Hill."

About three years later a document was forwarded to the English Ambassador from some one in Normandy, inquiring for news of Crèvecoeur, from whom nothing had been heard since 1767.⁸ His full name, place of birth, and personal appearance as there set down agree exactly with the known facts. The rest of the statement in the letter of inquiry has been taken as the basis of the account that has just been given of Crèvecoeur's experiences in America up to the time of his naturalization. This has been done in spite of the fact that it contradicts the theory that has been gaining ground ever since 1883, when Robert de Crèvecoeur's book appeared, that Crèvecoeur's first destination in the new world was Canada, that he reached there in 1754 or 1755, fought under Montcalm, was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in the régiment de la Sarre, and finally

³ See p. 24, and *Letters*, 1904, p. 312.

⁴ See p. 13, and p. 23.

⁵ Hippeau: *Gouvernement de Normandie*, III:142.

⁶ Appendix, pp. 307-309.

⁸ Appendix, pp. 313-314.

⁷ Appendix, p. 310.

disappeared from Canada in 1760 to reappear in the English colonies under the name of St. John. The supposition that the lieutenant in the French army was the same as the subject of this biography is far from fantastic. There is in fact much evidence which seems to support it and this will presently be considered in detail. But the account contained in the letter of inquiry from Normandy, which has only recently come to light, was unknown to Robert de Crèvecoeur, and, if he had seen it, might have altered his theory in regard to this Canadian episode. The statement which is here followed, furthermore, was made by a member of Crèvecoeur's own family, or some one acting for them, so that one seems to be warranted in assuming that the writer knew what he was talking about. Then, too, it is confirmed by statements Crèvecoeur himself made later. In 1779, when he was under arrest at New York, he reported to the officer who made the arrest that he was "a native of Caen in Normandy, but came into this Country many years ago and was naturalized; *that he first went into the Mercantile Line*⁹ but afterwards bought a farm in Orange County, on which he settled." To the Duke de la Rochefoucauld he wrote in 1784,¹⁰ "I never was but a simple Surveyor of Lands, a cultivator of my own grounds, or a wanderer through the Forests of this country, in company with some of the natives." A further indication of the probability of Crèvecoeur's first years in America having been spent in paths of peace and not in war is given in his letter to Franklin in 1781,¹¹ in which he says, in answer to the question as to whether "Mr. St. John" and "M. de Crèvecoeur" were

⁹ The italics are mine. The whole letter from which this extract is taken is given on page 55, note.

¹⁰ May 1, 1784, in the Library at Mantes.

¹¹ Franklin Papers, XXII: 163; at the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia.

the same man, "The name of our family is St. Jean, in English, St. John. . . . I am so great a stranger to the manner of this, though my native country, (having quitted it very young) that I never dreamt I had any other than the old family name. I was greatly astonished when at my late return, I saw myself under the necessity of being called by that of Crèvecoeur." In the first three letters (none of which, by the way, was known to Robert de Crèvecoeur) no allowance is made in the account of Crèvecoeur's first years in America for any campaigning, and the fourth letter disclaims his knowledge of any right to the name under which the lieutenant in Montcalm's army won his fame.

This last argument, which on the face of it seems the strongest, is really the weakest. It is the base, in fact, upon which the theory of his identity with the lieutenant who served in Canada may rest. For if one admits the possibility of St. John's not knowing until his return to France in 1781 that he had a right to the name of Crèvecoeur — a statement which seems plausible when one remembers that the original fief of Crèvecoeur was never in his father's possession, and that it passed out of the family of St. John's cousin, Marie de Crèvecoeur,¹² in 1766 — one must still look for an explanation of the fact that he seems to have known in 1769 that he had a right to it, when his marriage certificate designates him as "M. Michel-Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur communément appelé M. Saint-John,"¹³ and in 1776 when the baptismal record of his three children refers to him as "M. Michel-Guillaume Saint-John de Crèvecoeur, autrement appelé M. Saint-John."¹⁴ From

¹² It was sold by her husband, M. Cairon de Varenne, to Armand-Louis-Joseph Paris de Montmartel, Marquis de Brunoy (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 289).

¹³ Appendix, pp. 309-310.

¹⁴ Appendix, pp. 314-315.

this point one may go backward and discredit each link of the chain of evidence. If his remark to Franklin was untrue, his statement to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld may also be questioned, as well as that made to the British officer at the time of his arrest in 1779. Can one suppose, in order to understand why the inquirer from Normandy also made no reference to the Canadian episode, that his family were uninformed of it? This seems unlikely, because the *Gazette de France* (March 10, 1759) called attention to his services, and his family would therefore have learned of them by that means, even if no private news had reached them. But the Norman inquirer may have thought it politic, in requesting the British government for help in finding Crèvecoeur's whereabouts, to ignore the part he may have been known by the inquirer to have taken in opposition to that government. And in like manner, St. John, when arrested by the British during the Revolution, would naturally omit that part of his experiences. Once committed to this renunciation, he may have been simply adhering to it in his letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. These explanations may serve to introduce the account of the young French officer whose name so closely resembled that of the author of the *Letters from an American Farmer*, but they do not alter my conviction that the two men were not the same. For while the theory that Crèvecoeur did not take part in the campaign in Canada may be impossible to prove, it is not yet possible either, to prove that he did take part in it.

While M. Etienne Dussieux was engaged in writing his history of Canada under the French rule,¹⁵ he called the attention of St. John's great-grandson to a soldier, a lieutenant in the régiment de la Sarre, who might, he believed, be identified with St. John de Crèvecoeur. Robert de Crève-

¹⁵ *Le Canada sous la domination française d'après les archives de la marine et de la guerre.*

coeur felt convinced, from the similarity of the names and other circumstances, that this surmise was correct, and adopted the discovery in spite of the fact that no reference had been made by any of Crèvecoeur's earlier biographers to his having taken part in the campaign in Canada, and in face of the express statement in the introduction¹⁶ to the *Lettres d'un cultivateur* (1784, I: vii) that after having lived successively in several European countries, Crèvecoeur "ended" by establishing himself in Pennsylvania,¹⁷ and in the face of several other inconsistencies in the records of the two men.

No one, however, who examines Lieutenant Crèvecoeur's story can fail to be impressed with the naturalness of this error, if it be one. Michel Jean de Crèvecoeur was born January 6, 1738, at Paris, in the parish of Saint-Eustache.¹⁸ In 1758 he was proposed for promotion from cadet to lieutenant of the second battalion of the régiment de la Sarre, compagnie de Rumigny. The minister of war said in presenting the request for his promotion:¹⁹

"Ce jeune homme est cadet dans les troupes de la colonie. Il m'est très recommandé par le baron de Breteuil et M. le marquis d'Houdetôt. Il a des connaissances spéciales pour l'artillerie et le génie. Il sert avec distinction dans ces deux parties — là depuis qu'il est en Canada. J'ai l'agrément de M. le marquis de Vaudreuil pour le faire passer dans une bataillon ou ce sera une bonne acquisition."

Besides his talent for engineering and his proficiency as an artilleryman, the young man had some skill as a surveyor

¹⁶ This was written by Lacretelle, a friend of St. John's, and published in the *Mercure de France*, January 1, 1783, introducing some extracts from the book.

¹⁷ The reading is changed to "New York" in the list of errata (p. xxv). This may be understood not as contradicting the fact of his having gone to Pennsylvania, but as pointing toward his final establishment in New York.

¹⁸ Travail du roi, 25 juillet 1758, cited *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

and map-maker. The *Gazette de France*, March 10, 1759, reported that Montcalm's aide-de-camp, Bougainville, who had returned to France to ask the home government for help in the war, presented to the King at Versailles a map of the scene of war and a plan of the forts, drawn up by "le sieur de Crèvecoeur," an officer of the régiment de la Sarre, employed among the engineers, who had won great honor by his courage and by his talents.²⁰ This map is perhaps the one designated as "7 B. 59"²¹ in the dépôts des cartes de la guerre at Paris, entitled "Carte des limites du Canada avec les colonies anglaises, depuis les montagnes de la Virginie jusqu'à la ville de Trois-Rivières sur la fleuve Saint-Laurent."

Taking up the points of similarity in the circumstances of the two Crèvecoeurs, we see in the first place that "Michel Jean de Crèvecoeur" omits only the "Guillaume" from St. John's name as it appears in the baptismal record at Caen. To be sure he gives 1738 as the year of his birth, while "Michel Guillaume Jean" is registered as having been born in 1735,²² but this discrepancy one might conjecture to

²⁰ De Versailles le 8 mars 1759. Le sieur de Bougainville . . . a rendu comte au Roi de l'état général de la colonie et a eu l'honneur de présenter à Sa Majesté le plan des forts et la carte des lieux qui sont le théâtre de la guerre dans ce pays. Ces plans ont été levés par le sieur de Crèvecoeur, officier au régiment de la Sarre employé dans le génie et qui s'est fait beaucoup de réputation par sa bravoure et ses talents." (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 14).

²¹ Described in *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 15.

²² Mr. O. H. Marshall in June, 1880, wrote in the *Magazine of American History* that family records show that St. John himself was born in 1738. The fac-simile of the baptismal registry, given in *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 284, shows that this must have been a misapprehension. I can vouch for the correctness of Robert de Crèvecoeur's transcription, as Prof. Munro of Harvard was kind enough to have the register at Caen examined for me. The Paris record has been destroyed.

be due to a mere fault of memory on the soldier's part. It is stretching forgetfulness rather far, however, to make it also account for the fact that he gave January 6th as his birthday instead of January 31st. And the forgetfulness theory breaks down completely before the fact that he records himself as born at Paris instead of at Caen. It is a serious blow at the outset to the theory of the identity of the two Crèvecoeurs to find their names recorded differently and to find also that the year and day of their birth, as well as their birthplace, do not coincide. The reader must decide whether the rest of the evidence is strong enough to warrant a supposition that these variations were intentional. He is left in that case to account for a motive for these substitutions and having found it, to determine why a more complete disguise was not assumed.

The next coincidence in the careers of the two men lies in the fact that the Baron de Breteuil,²³ an old friend of St. John's father, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur, recommended the young cadet for promotion. It is further interesting to see the name of the Marquis d'Houdetôt appear in this connection, for he was a brother of the Comte d'Houdetôt, whose wife was an old acquaintance of St. John's father and a friend and patron of St. John himself from the time of his visit to Normandy in 1781 until the year of her death.

The map in the war department designated as "7 B. 59" must also be considered further. It belongs to this period, and it covers the ground which the "sieur de Crèvecoeur's" map described. It has no signature, but bears an endorsement which is given below.²⁴ Mr. O. H. Marshall of the

²³ See *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 13, note. See also a letter of friendly counsel from Breteuil to St. John in 1784, analyzed by Robert de Crèvecoeur, p. 352.

²⁴ "Manuscrite en 1758, d'une partie de l'Amérique qui comprend le Connecticut, Chamokin ville sur le lac St. Pierre, la Rivère Susque-

Buffalo Historical Society, who examined it in 1877, thought that this endorsement is in St. John's handwriting and therefore believed that the map was made by him.²⁵ But even if the handwriting is indeed St. John's, it may be that the description merely, and not the map, is from his hand, or it may be that this is only his copy from an older original by some one else. It is clear to any one who takes the trouble to examine St. John's correspondence, that he himself was a map-maker,²⁶ but this fact, while striking, may be a mere coincidence and not necessarily establish his authorship of the map which the sieur de Crèvecoeur presented to the King.

Last of all consider St. John's own testimony to his having been in Canada during the years of the French war. In a letter of 1813, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,²⁷ he speaks of a stay made at Quebec when he was twenty years old, that is in 1755, where he was "usefully and agreeably employed in drawing up large maps of the country." Moreover his biographer adds that in a copy of the *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie* containing annotations by Crèvecoeur's own hand he assumes the part of the French officer who is represented as relating an account of the massacre of certain English soldiers at Fort

hanna, le lac Ontario, Winchester ville dans la Virginie, et partie du lac Erie, lequel pays fait partie du Canada." On it are also given plans of Forts Quaris, Cannatchocary and Hunter, and the house of Sir William Johnson.

²⁵ *Magazine of American History*, June, 1880, p. 454.

²⁶ See a letter to Ethan Allen, July 17, 1785 (*Vermont Governor and Council*, p. 338), and one to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, March 14, 1785 (original at Mantes). See too among the maps in the Library of Congress, No. 137 of the Kohl Collection, a reproduction of a copy made by Crèvecoeur in 1785 for the Duke, from Peter Pond's map of Canada. See too *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 9.

²⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 7.

George by the Indian allies of the French.^{28 29} Robert de Crèvecoeur seems to feel that this is enough to prove the identity of the two men, but in addition refers to a letter written by the Marquis de Lotbinière,³⁰ June 7, 1790, from New York, to a friend³¹ in France, which shows incontestably ("d'une manière irrefragable"),³² that the lieutenant of this French regiment and St. John were the same person, in spite of the grave discrepancies to which attention has been called. Mr. Marshall, who probably learned of this letter when he visited Robert de Crèvecoeur in Paris, adds that in it the writer recalled St. John de Crèvecoeur to the memory of his correspondent, as one whom they had both met in Canada.³³ But this letter from the Marquis de Lotbinière to M. de Méloizes, although by far the most important document in the whole matter, has not yet been published. Robert de Crèvecoeur did not, perhaps could not, reproduce it, nor have I been more successful. His family were kind enough to promise to try to get a copy of it for me, but I have so far failed to receive it. Until students can have an opportunity to examine for themselves this letter, on which perhaps the whole case hangs, it will probably not be possible to establish or to disprove the identification of the lieutenant de la Sarre with St. John de Crèvecoeur.

²⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 8, note.

²⁹ I:337.

³⁰ Michael Eustache Gaspard, Marquis de Lotbinière, was born in Canada in 1723. In 1763 he was government engineer in New France. He superintended the building of Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) and in 1759 was engineer-in-chief in Canada.

³¹ M. de Méloizes (Nicolas Renaud d'Avène), an ancestor of Robert de Crèvecoeur's mother (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 12).

³² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 12, note 2.

³³ *Magazine of American History*, June, 1880, p. 453.

CHAPTER III

THE WANDERER

IN the short biographical notice¹ which prefaces the first French edition of the *Farmer's Letters*² we are told that Crèvecoeur had been a dweller in several European lands before he set out for the new world. France and England he knew, as we have seen; it may be that some time was spent in Portugal also, for there is a tradition in the Crèvecoeur family that St. John visited that country on his way to Canada. The tradition further asserts that he saw the ruined city of Lisbon which had just been overthrown by the earthquake of 1755. Yet it is rather surprising, even in those days of circuitous and wind-blown travel, that a voyager should journey from England³ to Canada by way of Portugal. Moreover Crèvecoeur could not have reached Canada in 1754, the year which his great-grandson considered most probable, and could barely have reached it in 1755, Count de Crèvecoeur's alternate date,⁴ if, as the tradition affirms, he saw Lisbon in ruins. Among the Crèvecoeur papers there is a manuscript entitled "The Rock of Lisbon," in which the author refers to a visit to Portugal made at some

¹ The sketch was written by Crèvecoeur's friend Lacroix, who with Target, referred to as "mon ami intime" by the Farmer, saw the edition through the press.

² *Lettres*, 1784, T., viii.

³ Robert de Crèvecoeur believes that his ancestor left for America immediately after the visit to England, but does not say specifically that he left from an English port. See *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 6.

⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 6-7.

time after the catastrophe of 1755.⁵ Crèvecoeur, however, was not always the hero of the adventures which he relates, even where he uses the first person in recounting them, for he was an assiduous collector of anecdotes. This account of Lisbon may have formed the basis for the assumption that St. John himself visited that city, and this assumption may have crystallized in time into a tradition to that effect, while in reality the episode may merely recount the experience of some other traveller.⁶

If St. John is to be identified with the young soldier who took part in the attack on Fort George in 1757 and made the campaigns of 1758 and 1759, it is probable that some time between 1755 and 1757 he journeyed by way of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie as far as Detroit, and from that place southward to the Scioto River and the forks of the Muskingum. Evidence of this trip is furnished, Robert de Crèvecoeur thinks, by the details of this region on the map of the French possessions made by the Canadian Crèvecoeur in 1758, now to be found at the War Office. It is further supported, he believes, by the annotations in Crèvecoeur's own copy of the *Voyage* (II:105), and by several passages in his correspondence, which however are not cited. Other expeditions too, he thinks, must have been taken in the interests of this map — journeys in the region of Lake Champlain and of the head-waters of the Hudson. By 1760 all traces of the Canadian Crèvecoeur disappear from the official records. According to the Marquis de Lotbinière's letter, cited by Robert de Crèvecoeur, he left Canada and reached

⁵ This account formed the basis of an episode in the *Voyage* (II: 275), *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 6, note 2.

⁶ Notice in connection with this discussion a comment in Crèvecoeur's account of Nantucket: "There is but one priest on the whole island. What would a good Portuguese observe?" (Letter 7, p. 192, ed. 1904.)

the upper waters of the Hudson, where he first became known by his family name of Saint Jean, anglicized to Saint John for the sake of caution. Here for a time he supported himself by surveying, M. de Lotbinière says, until the delights of farming gradually so won upon him that he abandoned this roving existence to become a land-owner and cultivator of his own fields, first in Pennsylvania (his biographer thinks), and finally in the province of New York.⁷

Whether we believe that our Crèvecoeur actually underwent these various experiences in Canada or not, finally reaching the English colonies in the way that has been described, or whether we believe that the Norman inquirer was right in thinking that his first destination in the new world was Pennsylvania, we shall still be unable to account for his exact whereabouts or for just what he was doing during the time between his coming to this country and the year of his naturalization in the province of New York in the latter part of 1765. Much of that time was spent in journeying, whether as map-maker, engineer and soldier, or as surveyor and trader.⁸ These wanderings were often accompanied by hardship. "You know, my dear father," wrote his son in later years recounting his own sufferings in the Retreat from Moscow, "how irresistible are hunger and sleep, for you experienced them in the deserts of America."⁹ With the Indians who were sometimes his only companions on these expeditions, Crèvecoeur seems to have been on terms of good understanding. He understood

⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 10.

⁸ See *Letters*, 1904, p. 312, for a reference to his having been engaged in trading with the Indians: "In my youth I traded with the . . . under the conduct of my uncle, and always traded justly and equitably; some of them remember it to this day." The "uncle" need not be taken seriously, nor can one be sure that the statement has any biographical value, but it is suggestive.

⁹ Leipzig, March 10, 1813 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 420).

and appreciated the charm of their manner of life¹⁰ and succeeded in doing more justice to their estimable qualities than other Europeans sometimes did. The French generally surpassed the other colonists in this respect, to be sure, but Crèvecoeur's tribute to them in the second volume of the *Lettres* (pp. 335-336) is striking, and his exposure of the wrongs Europeans have done them is one of the earliest and most forceful of such utterances. It may be that the phrase on the title-page of the *Voyage*, "par un membre adoptif de la nation Onéida," and the reference in that book to his adoption by the tribe of the Maskinongé are not purely fanciful, for there always seems to have existed a strong sympathy between Crèvecoeur and the children of the woods. It is noteworthy, however, that in spite of the idealistic and romantic quality of much of Crèvecoeur's writings he does not fall into the Indian worship of later French writers, nor with all his appeal for the Simple Life does he ever advocate an adoption of their mode of existence. In the *Voyage*, on the contrary, he shows that while the Europeans have treated the rightful owners of this continent unfairly, the manner of life of the Indians is one of the main causes of their suffering.

During these years Crèvecoeur journeyed widely throughout eastern America, jotting down at night, according to his habit, the happenings of the day and his observations upon what he saw. "Few of the writers about America," he wrote in 1782, "have resided here, and those who have, have not pervaded every part of the country, nor carefully examined the nature and principles of our association." This Crèvecoeur may be fairly said to have succeeded in

¹⁰ "Il y a donc dans leur système social . . . quelque chose de supérieur aux charmes de nos mœurs et de nos coutumes, puisque des milliers d'Européens sont devenus volontairement Sauvages. . . ." (*Lettres*, II:333.)

doing, for at one time or another he became familiar with Canada, with Nova Scotia and St. John's, with the country about the Kennebec and the region later known as Vermont, with Massachusetts and Connecticut, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, with New York and Pennsylvania and some, at least, of the southern states, with parts of Ohio and Kentucky and probably with Jamaica and Bermuda. His books, especially those written in French, are crowded with anecdote and description relating to the first-mentioned regions. Very early (in 1764, according to a statement in a letter to the Duke of Harcourt), he wandered over Vermont.¹¹ It seems probable that not long after his coming to the colonies he made the journey to the southern part of the country, and probably to this period we may assign a trip¹² to Jamaica and the Bermudas.¹³ It is hard to tell just when the western trip was made. Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard may have been visited in 1773, the year Robert de Crèvecoeur gives. It is impossible to be sure when the trip to Niagara was made. It is described in great detail in a letter to Alexander de Crèvecoeur, published in

¹¹ Boston, July 27, 1787, Hippeau's *Gouvernement de Normandie*, III:137.

¹² A letter to Jefferson from Crèvecoeur, N. Y., May 18, 1785, among the Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress (Ser. 2, Vol. 74, No. 5), seems to indicate that Crèvecoeur actually made this trip.

¹³ The object of this journey, Crèvecoeur says (*Lettres*, 1784, I: 230), was to secure an uncle's inheritance. In view of the details which follow, of which some are impossible to reconcile with the known facts of Crèvecoeur's life, there seems no necessity for taking this explanation seriously. In the edition of 1787 the journey is referred to the year 1773. It is more likely that it took place in 1767, as Robert de Crèvecoeur thinks, the date to which it is assigned in the *Voyage* (II:431), a date which falls in with the period of his wanderings rather than with the busy early days on the Orange County farm, when the task of clearing his land and establishing his home in that almost unbroken country would have made difficult an absence of that length.

the *Magazine of American History* for October, 1878. The date which Crèvecoeur gave to it is July, 1785, obviously an impossible one since at that time he was in France.

With Pennsylvania, which he calls the queen of the colonies,¹⁴ Crèvecoeur became acquainted very early. If the inquirer from Normandy is right, it was to Philadelphia that he first turned his steps. The edition of 1784 of the *Farmer's Letters* gives a detailed description of its streets and market-place and includes a special recommendation of the hospital,¹⁵ "only comparable," he says, "to those of Montreal and Quebec." But Crèvecoeur soon became familiar with other parts of this province. It seems likely that Shippensburg was among the places that he first visited, for he says that he knew this town from its earliest infancy and adds, "I have seen the forests of that region transformed into fertile fields and the lowlands into beautiful meadows. My thoughts will never turn toward it without the most grateful emotions."¹⁶ In Lancaster county he remarks upon the extraordinary fertility of the soil and upon the industry and intelligence of its inhabitants.¹⁷ At Dover, in Kent county, he tells us, he spent a month¹⁸ with Walter Mifflin¹⁹ on his return from a trip to Lancaster. Much of the *Farmer's Letters* especially in their later expanded form, and many pages of the *Voyage* evidence Crèvecoeur's familiarity with one section and another of this province. Although there is no proof of his being a land-owner there, it is not impossible that such was the case, for at that time

¹⁴ *Letters*, 1904, 264.

¹⁵ If he were ill and homeless, he adds, he should go to the hospital in Montreal, and if he could not get in there he should go to Philadelphia (*Lettres*, T. 255). See, too, *Letters*, 1904:96, 178.

¹⁶ *Voyage*, I: 363-364.

¹⁷ *Lettres*, 1784, II:229.

¹⁸ *Lettres*, 1784, I:xi.

¹⁹ Mifflin, Penn and Bertram are among the Quakers whose eulogies Crèvecoeur stops to pronounce.

an alien might be recognized as a proprietor if at the end of three years he had built a house, planted an orchard, and driven a well on every thousand acres.²⁰ This supposition, however, is conjectural merely and arose in the first place from an attempt on the part of writers about Crèvecoeur to account for his describing himself on the title-page of his first book as "a farmer in Pennsylvania." But the circumstances already referred to seem sufficient to explain this. Pennsylvania was an early home of Crèvecoeur's in the new world, perhaps his first home there, and he knew and admired many of the leading men in that colony and felt warm sympathy with the principles of its foundation. This province, too, typified much that was best in the new country, and the conditions of life there were characteristic of American conditions in general. That he should assume this title, therefore, does not seem an idle caprice, for he had been both a Pennsylvanian and a farmer when this title-page was printed, and his connection with the province of his first adoption was continued long after his residence there ceased, as will be seen later. It is not by mere coincidence that his first book was signed from "a farmer in Pennsylvania," that the first American edition of this book came from the press of a Philadelphia publisher²¹ and that his last book received the title of "A Journey in Pennsylvania."²²

But Crèvecoeur's close connection with this province ceased with his naturalization in the colony of New York. The date of this event seems at first to present some difficulty. In 1785 he wrote to Ethan Allen, "I am an American by a law of this State New York past in the year 1763."²³ Yet, unfortunately, he wrote on another occasion, "J'ai été

²⁰ *Voyage*, I:178-179.

²¹ Mathew Carey, 1793.

²² *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie et dans l'état de New-York*, Paris, 1801.

²³ N. Y., May 31, 1785 (*Vermont, Gov. and Council*, III: 386-388).

naturalisé en 1764.”²⁴ Robert de Crèvecoeur gives April 18, 1764, as the precise date of this occurrence, without referring to the source of his information. But an examination of the *Laws of New York from the year 1691 to 1773*²⁵ shows that an act for naturalizing “John Hector St. John” and eleven other foreigners, was passed December 23, 1765. The terms of this act provided that those who were named were to take the Abjuration Oath in any court of record within the colony and to pay the Speaker of the General Assembly ten shillings, the judge of the court where the oath was taken six shillings, and the clerk three shillings. For their certificate of citizenship they were required to pay six shillings, making the total expense of the transaction twenty-five shillings. We do not know in what court the oath was taken nor at what date, but it is certain that Crèvecoeur became an American citizen at some time between December 23, 1765, and December 23, 1766, for the act just referred to states that it became of no effect unless the oath were taken within the twelve-month following.

²⁴ Letter to the mayor and aldermen of Hartford, June 4, 1783 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 22).

²⁵ Printed at New York by Hugh Gaine, Vol. 2, p. 481. See the “Act for naturalizing John Hector St. John, Johannes de Graaf . . .” etc. reproduced on pp. 307-309 of the Appendix.

CHAPTER IV

GREYCOURT AND PINE HILL

WITH the coming of St. John into Orange County, we find ourselves on surer ground than we have heretofore been treading. Documents relating to his life in the colony of New York are numerous, and in addition to these, the *Letters from an American Farmer* further enlighten us as to this period.¹ Still, the time of his coming into this country-side is uncertain. It was in 1759, if we take literally Washington's words to Richard Henderson, "M. Crèvecoeur . . . actually resided twenty years as a farmer in that state [New York]." ² Crèvecoeur himself informed the Royal Agricultural Society at Paris in 1786 that he had gathered in seventeen harvests in America.³ As he left his farm in January, 1779, this may mean that his first ingathering was in 1761, approximately the time that Washington (who was probably using round numbers) assigned to his coming to New York. It is possible that his first experiments in farming took place in Ulster County, since he is referred to as "Hector St. John of Ulster County" in a document of 1769.⁴ Probably about 1764, or a little later, he took up his abode in Orange County. May 2, 1764, is the date he gives for the occurrence,⁵ but as

¹ See especially Letter 2 and Letter 12.

² Washington, *Works*, ed. W. C. Ford, XI: 283.

³ François de Neufchâteau's *Lettre sur la Robinier*, Paris, 1803, p. 141. This volume reproduces St. John's "Mémoire" on the acacia read before the society, March 30, 1786, in which he makes this statement.

⁴ See Appendix, p. 310.

⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 21.

he adds that it took place some months after his naturalization in New York, which he says was April 18, 1764 (although we know that the act was not passed until December 23, 1765), this cannot be relied upon as an exact statement.

Crèvecoeur refers to his first home in Orange County as "the old Greycourt." This may have been Daniel Crommeline's⁶ old home of that name⁷ built for him in 1716 by William Bull on the edge of the Greycourt meadows, on the border line between the present towns of Blooming-Grove and Chester. Crommeline's house, the first to be built in this whole region, stood for many years after Crèvecoeur's name had passed from the memory of the people of this neighborhood. Although now demolished, it can be remembered by a few of the oldest dwellers in Chester. One of these who was born in a house a few rods farther down the road,⁸ recalls a stone end-wall with sides built of timber. More than fifty years ago, the father of the present owner of the old Bull house at Hamptonburg, which was built by

⁶ Daniel Crommeline, a French Huguenot who came into this country towards the close of the seventeenth century, was one of the owners of the Waywayanda Patent. In 1712 he and Christopher Denne and Benjamin Aske, the three surviving shareholders, decided to make a settlement in this region. It is strange that Crèvecoeur, with his fondness for interesting narrations, never told the story of Sarah Wells, Denne's adopted daughter, who, when only sixteen years old, preceded her father into this wilderness, accompanied only by Indian guides. Not many years later she married William Bull, the builder of Grey-court and of the old Bull house at Hamptonburg.

⁷ Various fantastic suggestions are given in county histories for the choice of this name, but it was probably adapted from "Gricourt," a town a few miles from Crommeline's birth-place at St. Quentin.

⁸ This house, too, is sometimes called the "Crommeline House." One end, indeed, is very old, but as the informant just referred to had never heard it so called, and as the lettered stones described were taken, not from this house, but from the neighboring one, this claim seems unsubstantial.

William Bull about the same time as Greycourt, took away and inserted in the upper wall of his own house two stones that had formed part of the old Crommeline house. On these is cut rudely the inscription "D. C. 17 G. C. 16," that is, "Daniel Crommeline, Greycourt, 1716." Part of the stone-work of this old building has gone into the foundation of the house belonging to William R. Conklin, of Chester, which stands a little farther back from the road. While it cannot be absolutely proved that St. John took up his abode in this house when he came into Orange County, "le vieux Greycourt" seems to point to the Crommeline house, which had gone by that name ever since it was built about fifty years earlier.

In 1769 St. John probably first became a land-holder. In that year he bought a hundred and twenty acres, part of the tract originally owned by Crommeline, only a few rods distant from "Greycourt." To this purchase he gave the name of "Pine Hill." Robert de Crèvecoeur is puzzled by the fact that St. John also refers to this home sometimes as "Greycourt," but this is not surprising since Crommeline's whole tract, as well as the house built for him, went by this name. His biographer says, in speaking of the farm at Pine Hill, "It would probably be very difficult to-day to find its exact location," but there can be no doubt that it lies on either side of the high-road leading from Blooming-Grove to Chester, adjoining the home of Mr. William R. Conklin, who now owns both these sites. The Pine Hill property, which he purchased many years ago, included one hundred and twenty acres, described in exactly the same terms as the property bought by Hector St. John for three hundred and fifty pounds, from James and Phœbe Nesbit, December 12, 1769. It is certain that the house known as "Elmcote," next door to Mr. Conklin's house, stands on the site of Crèvecoeur's home, and it is quite possible that St.

John's house forms the core of "Elmcote." Any one familiar with the water-color sketch⁹ that Crèvecoeur made of his house in 1778 will recognize upon seeing "Elmcote" that it stands in the same relation to the road that "Pine Hill" did. The hill behind the house is still called by that name, and is still crowned by a few gaunt trees, the only vestige of the grove that once stood there. But the present building is plainly made over from an older one. It may be that the foundation and part of the ground-floor alone can be claimed as St. John's. The back wall and part of the end wall are enclosed in a newer wall, so that the depth of the house and its length at the back are greater than formerly. But the façade still shows five windows, as in his sketch, and the old-time grace of the lower door-way with its slender side-lights, now obscured by flying steps leading to a high piazza, leads me to think that this is the old entrance which supported the tiny portico shown in his drawing. Besides the alterations which have been indicated, the roof has been raised to make way for shallow third-story windows, while its angle has been somewhat changed and broken by several gables.

Crèvecoeur's new property, according to the deed of purchase in the county clerk's office at Goshen, began

"at a Heap of Stones in the northwest corner of Josiah Gilbert's Easternmost Lott on which he lives in the north line of the said Tract — Thence running north 87 degrees west as the Line of the said Tract runs to the Brook 26 chains to the said Gilbert's Westernmost Lott, then south along the said Lott 27 degrees east to the River, 72 chains then northerly as the River runs about 20 chains to the first mentioned Lott north 20 degrees west 49 chains to the place of Beginning."

This somewhat unintelligible description included a well-chosen farm-stead. Pine Hill, the rise of ground which gave

⁹ Reproduced in photogravure by Mr. Franklin Sanborn in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for January, 1906, and in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* for July, 1906.

the place its name, offered a protecting shoulder from high winds for the house and for the orchard which was originally at the right of the dwelling. To this day there is no more fertile tract in the state than the black marsh land in front of the house, across the high-road, known now as then as the "Greycourt meadows." This was part of the great marsh whose clearing Crèvecoeur has described.^{10 11} A little book published in Boston in 1874¹² by Emily Delesdernier, which attempts to tell the story of St. John's daughter to whom the enthusiastic colonist gave the name of "America-Francés," describes in the opening scene the coming of a stranger to "Greycourt." The house, it is here said, fronted a beautiful lake. This, if true, suggests that the Greycourt meadows were not then so well drained as now. The "brook" or "river" of the deed, Crommeline Creek, which drains these meadows, runs from Walton Lake by the base of Goose Pond Mountain, through the Greycourt tract and over the picturesque falls at Craigville, near St. John's home. It has all the charm of variety, now rushing between high banks, now slipping from ledge to ledge of spreading rock, and now widening pond-wise between level pastures. As for woodland at Pine Hill, that need hardly be specified, since it was the commonest kind to be had in the wilderness, and the kind least esteemed. For this reason St. John's appreciation of the grandeur of the great trees on his land is noteworthy. "In spite of the trouble and expense," he says, "in clearing the land and cultivating the fields, in spite of the fatal custom of regarding trees as enemies, as

¹⁰ Letter to the mayor and aldermen of Hartford, Jan. 4, 1783 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 22).

¹¹ Letter to Ethan Allen, N. Y., May 31, 1785 (*Vt., Gov. & Council*, III: 386-388).

¹² *Fannie St. John, a romantic incident of the American Revolution*. Hurd and Houghton.

intruders on the soil, a land-owner after a number of years is, nevertheless, instinctively more moved, more delighted in ranging his woods than in crossing his fields."¹³ "How can one fail to reverence these gigantic pines which neither art nor cultivation can ever replace, these oaks, more ancient than our capitals?" The often-quoted anecdote of the sassafras and the vine¹⁴ further illustrates Crèvecoeur's fondness for his forest neighbors. Walking in his woods one day with his little girl, he saw a young sassafras tree upon which a vine was climbing. This tree, with its encircling vine, he carefully transferred to his garden, where he planted it with great solemnity. To the astonished child whom he had bidden to watch the whole proceeding he explained that the tree represented her father and the vine herself. Her dependence upon him and his delight in her affection were thus symbolized, he continued, and this was to be recalled to her mind whenever she looked upon them. Her promise to do so was sealed with "scalding tears," "to which," he adds, "I could not be restrained from adding my own, the sweetest I had shed for many a year." The anniversary of this event was kept regularly for many years, and the neighbors were invited to join in its celebration.¹⁵

¹³ *Voyage*, I:65-66.

Elsewhere he tells with amusement and some dismay, of a man who said upon landing in Ireland, "What a beautiful country, I don't see a single tree." (*Voyage*, I:371).

¹⁴ First told in the 1784 edition of the *Lettres*, I:224-229. See the list of reprints from Crèvecoeur's writings, in the Appendix, p. 347.

¹⁵ Some indulgence must be exercised toward the author who has stated in a note that the scene passed between himself and his daughter, and yet, in the anecdote, bids his daughter say whenever she looks at the tree, "My father planted this tree the 4th. of October 1774; he dedicated it in the presence of my mother and my two brothers A. and L. as monument of his paternal affection for me." "L." is presumably

But the man who felt the mystery and grandeur of the American forest before our poets sang of them, who realized the grace of the sheltering trees of his own homestead, who shed delicious tears upon the occasion we have just cited, although a sentimentalist, undoubtedly, was something more. A careful study of the false acacia and of its uses in the United States was submitted by him to the Royal Agricultural Society at Paris in 1786,¹⁶ ¹⁷ in which, besides many incidents of his life at "Greycourt" and "Pine Hill," he details the virtues of this tree, generally known as the locust and sometimes so-called in his writings. The merit of this pamphlet and the impression it made will be discussed in the chapter on Crèvecoeur as an agriculturalist, but it may be remarked here that, although it is seldom found in this country, this pamphlet should nevertheless be sought for by those who wish to form an idea of St. John's life before the Revolution. Those who take the trouble to consult it will be rewarded by the charm and fervor of these pages, devoted to a subject upon which it would seem somewhat difficult to grow enthusiastic. Crèvecoeur's conviction with regard to the usefulness of the acacia is founded, he says, upon observations made in the forests of Pennsylvania, of Maryland, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.¹⁸ It is interesting to observe in connection with his claim to have introduced the tree into Orange County that there is a locust hedge in front of the house adjoining "Pine Hill" or

intended to represent her brother Louis, who, however, was not born until October 22, 1774! Crèvecoeur's attention may have been called to this discrepancy, for in a reference to this event, many years later, he carefully dates the planting "April 3, 1777." (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 408.)

¹⁶ It does not exist in this country, so far as I know, in any form except in François de Neufchâteau's *Lettre sur la Robinier*, Paris, 1803, where it is reprinted entire.

¹⁷ *Mémoire sur la culture . . . du faux acacia*, etc., p. 130.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

"Elmcote." The little treatise has an interest, aside from its concern with the acacia, in the picture which it presents of country life in America at this time. As such it must be considered as a pendant to the second of the *Letters*, "On the Situation, Feelings and Pleasures of an American Farmer," in which St. John tells the story of the Pine Hill days. Busy days they must have been, for in letters to his friends later he wrote of the great marsh he had drained, of the woodland he had cleared, the house he had built, and the well he had driven. Yet his labors were diversified by many pleasures, some of which are described in the letter referred to, and some in the tenth Letter, where he details his observations of the creatures on his farm.

About two months¹⁹ before the purchase of "Pine Hill" Crèvecoeur was married to Mehitable Tippet, of Yonkers. The name Tippet, or Tippets, was an old name in that region. George Tippet, one of the proprietors of Westchester County, owned the neck of land²⁰ which forms the northern bank at the mouth of Spuyten Duyvil Creek sometimes called "Tippet's Hill,"²¹ and the principal stream of Yonkers is called after him, although corrupted into "Tibbetts"²² in recent times. Tippet, who had lived at Flushing, on Long Island, before he came into this part of the colony, purchased in 1668, with William Betts, a large tract of land extending from the Hudson to the Bronx.²³ He died in 1675 leaving a wife and daughter, both named Mehitable. The daughter could not have been the one who became St. John's wife, because his wife belonged to the generation succeeding, but she may have been an aunt for whom his wife was named.

¹⁹ September 20, 1769 (see Appendix, p. 309).

²⁰ Later called "Berrian's Neck."

²¹ Scharf: *Westchester County*, I:747.

²² The damming of this stream forms Van Cortlandt Lake.

²³ Allison: *The History of Yonkers*, 1896, p. 52.

Early Wills of Westchester County, New York, 1664-1784,²⁴ mentions a Henry Tippet who left a house and lot in New York on Dey Street to a daughter "Hetebele." It seems possible that this is our Mehitable Tippet, that she was the niece of George Tippet's daughter of the same name, and grand-daughter, consequently, of the first Tippet to settle in Westchester County. The name passed away from this part of the country after the Revolution, because the family were Loyalists and fled to Nova Scotia, leaving their property to be confiscated. This property was afterwards sold to Samuel Berrian, who married Dorcas Tippet, daughter of the former proprietor Henry Tippet. A second daughter became the wife of Colonel James De Lancey.²⁵

One gets a few glimpses of St. John's wife in the *Letters*, but these hints are not all meant to be taken seriously. For example she is represented in the first one as talking like a Quaker,²⁶ although there is no reason for supposing that she was one. She says, in the same letter, regarding her education, something more likely to have been true, "When I was a girl, father sent us to the very best master in the precinct."²⁷ But when Crèvecoeur refers to her as "his first choice, whom his evil genius had almost led him to forget,"²⁸ one realizes that this is simply a romantic decoration. Yet while one cannot attach significance to this particular statement, for the reader will recall that he had been engaged while he was in England to a young woman who had died before he set out for America,²⁹ one may believe that he was fortunate in his choice that their life together was a happy one and that his wife's death, which will be referred to later, was a very great sorrow, since he could

²⁴ Page 123.

²⁵ Bolton: *History of the County of Westchester*, II:438.

²⁶ Page 4 (edition 1904).

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Page 52 (edition 1904).

²⁹ Chapter II, page 11.

not trust himself to discuss it even with the Duke de la Rochefoucauld to whom he wrote so often and so intimately.³⁰

In one edition of the Letters,³¹ Crèvecoeur refers to himself as twenty-six years old at the time of his marriage. He was really eight years older, but this statement need cause no surprise, for the *Letters* are not altogether autobiographical, as has been seen. Yet it is somewhat amazing to find him informing Ethan Allen, in a letter of 1785, that he was married in 1770.³² Crèvecoeur was constitutionally unwilling, or unable, to give the correct date for the various circumstances which he records. For example, he gives two dates for his naturalization in New York, and a wrong date for his marriage. He dated an account of a visit to Niagara Falls which he sent to his eldest son "1785," at which time he was in France. These are only a few of the inaccurate dates to be found in his private letters and in his published work. Such inadvertences (or intentional perversions) lead some students of Crèvecoeur's career to think that the difference in the date and the place of his birth which the lieutenant of the régiment de la Sarre gave and that which is recorded of St. John himself, is no serious drawback to the theory of the identity of the two men.

"Mehetable Tippet" and "Hector St. John," to use the forms of their names which appear in the marriage certificate, were married at Westchester by Jean Pierre Tétard³³ who

³⁰ "Un événement funeste don Javois en France un fort pressentiment, a eu sur mon âme un si grand Effet que Je ne puis prendre sur moy de m'occuper d'autre chose si non de Reflections mélancholiques que cette Perte m'inspire. Jay retrouvé mes deux Enfants en bonne santé — mais leur Mère . . . Permettez moy de tirer un rideau sur ce. . . ." (Crèvecoeur to the Duke, Dec. 17, 1783; in the Library at Mantes).

³¹ *Lettres*, 1784: I: 52.

³² *Vermont, Governor and Council*, III: 386-388.

³³ His name is preserved in "Tétard's Hill," the height of land lying along the east shore of the Hudson, somewhat north of Spuyten Duyvil.

lived at Kingsbridge, close to the Tippet estate. Tétard was undoubtedly the original of the "Minister" in the Introductory Letter, concerning whom the English and French editions offer conflicting details.³⁴ He is represented in the story as inducing the author to consent to record his impressions of American life for the benefit of a friend in Europe who had written to make this request of the "Farmer." Tétard³⁵ actually was a French pastor who had served successively in the Huguenot church at Charleston, in the French church in New York, and in the old Dutch church at Fordham. During the Revolution he was chaplain of one of the New York regiments and interpreter to General Schuyler. In 1781 he went to Philadelphia, where he was employed in the Foreign Affairs Office under Livingston. In 1784 he was appointed professor of French at Columbia College, which position he filled until his death in 1787.³⁶ It seems just possible that some of St. John's conversations with Tétard may have suggested the description of Charleston in the *Letters* and perhaps have furnished the often quoted incident of the negro in the cage, in the ninth of the Farmer's *Letters*.

Some idea of St. John's appearance at this time can be gained from the letter of inquiry from Normandy which has been referred to. His height was five feet four inches,

³⁴ These are not important to discuss, since in both cases they are only part of a thin disguise.

³⁵ "Jean Pierre Tétard," (*Columbia University Quarterly*, June, 1910), J. P. Mitchell.

³⁶ His interment in the family vault in Trinity church-yard was attended, the obituary notice reads (*Independent Journal*, Feb. 10, 1787), by "the different Professors and students of the College, and a number of the most respectable inhabitants of the city." There can be no doubt that Crèvecoeur, his old friend and neighbor, at that time consul from France at New York, was among the "respectable inhabitants" who followed the cortège.

and he is described as well-knit and well-proportioned. His hair was red, his face long, especially the chin, but full. He had fine brown eyes and well-drawn eyebrows, a good open brow and a large nose and mouth. The portrait which precedes Robert de Crèvecoeur's life of his great-grandfather confirms most of these details. It shows, further, a well-poised head, an alert and kindly expression, and a face distinguished by intelligence.

All three of Crèvecoeur's children were born at Pine Hill.³⁷ To the oldest, born December 14, 1770, he gave the name of America-Francis; the two sons, born August 5, 1772 and October 22, 1774, received the names of Guillaume Alexandre and Philippe-Louis. One wintry day in December, 1776, Tétard, who had returned to Kingsbridge after the campaign in Canada, rode over to baptize the three children, for whom Verdine and Dorothy Ellsworth acted as sponsors. Verdine Ellsworth was a large property-owner in Orange County, and his wife, Dorothy, was a sister of Samuel Gale, of Galesborough, who was a justice of the peace and a member of the General Assembly.

A word may be added here in regard to Isaac and Margaret Willett, the witnesses of St. John's marriage. They were substantial people from Westchester County, of which Isaac was sheriff for twenty-nine years.³⁸ At his death in 1774, Isaac Willett bequeathed his home at Cornwall's Neck to his wife, to go at her death to his two nephews. The will adds a graphic touch at this point, "And I think proper to declare that this last part was intended for my nephew Gilbert Colden Willett; but his grandfather Governor Colden (who I suppose is well able to make provision for him) has treated me and my wife very unkindly in removing my nephew

³⁷ See the record of baptism (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 284, reproduced pp. 314-315 of the Appendix).

³⁸ 1735-1766 (Bolton: *History of the County of Westchester*, I: xx).

Louis Graham from the office of sheriff which I resigned in his favour.”³⁹ Margaret Willett died in 1784; her will requested her executors to build a small vault near the place where her husband was buried, in which to deposit the remains of the pair, “without much pomp or show.”⁴⁰

The reason for dwelling on these details at some length is that upon Crèvecoeur’s return to France the legitimacy of his children was called into question. There can be no doubt as to the regularity of the marriage, from our point of view; the well-known persons who took part in the marriage ceremony and on the occasion of his children’s baptism, make this clear; but as St. John married out of the kingdom, married a Protestant furthermore, and engaged a Protestant clergyman to perform the ceremony, the right of his children to succeed to their grandfather’s property was questioned under the rigid law which then prevailed in France. Unfortunately, when Crèvecoeur returned to this country, late in 1783, his wife was dead, so that the marriage could not be repeated in accordance with the rites of the Catholic church. Isaac Willett, too, was dead, and his wife died about this time. Tétard, to be sure, was living, but his death a few years later came after a long illness during which his mind was clouded. The distressed father took counsel with French and American lawyers, and consulted the Baron de Breteuil,⁴¹ the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Barbé de Marbois and others. His persistence and ingenuity and the result of his efforts will be discussed in a later chapter.⁴²

The main events of St. John’s life in Orange County have been chronicled up to the year of the birth of his youngest child in 1774. The tremendous efforts involved in the

³⁹ *Early Wills of Westchester County, New York*, pp. 304–305. See too, pp. 95 and 316.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁴¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 24, note.

⁴² See Chapter IX, “On Furlough,” pp. 138–142.

struggle with timber and marsh on this farm, in the erection of the substantial house and out-buildings shown in his sketch, in the planting of the orchard and in the cultivation of the fields, make it seem probable that the surveyor was lost in the farmer during the ten years that were spent at Pine Hill.⁴³ Never was there a more enthusiastic farmer. The pages describing these years fairly glow with the deep and quiet satisfaction which they brought to the colonist. The years of the consulship, which were soon to follow, brought larger responsibilities, and later years brought him literary recognition and carried him into more varied scenes, but it seems to have been St. John's wont to look back upon these years as the most satisfying and complete of his life. He was hardly embarked upon public life before he sighed to his friend, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, "Ah! if I only had an income of 200 Louis, I would go back and cultivate my farm and my friends;"⁴⁴ and in his declining years he inscribed on a little gift reminiscent of this epoch, "Sweet and pleasant is the memory of farmer's days."⁴⁵ Some of St. John's contemporaries and some of those who lived at a later date, accused him of over-coloring his pages and even of consciously attempting to induce emigration to the new land. It is easy to believe, however, in the sincerity of his enthusiasm, for he had youth and health in his favor, a happy home, success in his undertakings, the esteem of his neighbours and a very fair land to dwell in. There are few parts of our country, probably, which combine to so marked an extent diversity and beauty of landscape and fertility of soil. Good farm lands are so commonly monotonous in appearance, picturesque scenery so often implies sterility, that

⁴³ L'Orient, September 16, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.

⁴⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 408.

⁴⁵ There seem to be indications of occasional trips, however, in the region of Orange County and farther afield.

it is no wonder our farmer-poet sometimes grew rhapsodical over the pleasant country-side into which his lot had fallen. He had an eye and an ear for more than the stock subjects of rural life; for something beside the terror of the thunder-storm that breaks over the heat-stricken fields or the peril of the silent snow to the storm-bound traveller. He noted the peculiar sound of the wind that precedes the coming storm, and described for us the life of the small dwellers on his farm — the wasps and the bees, the snakes, the pigeons, and the humming-birds. It may be that he was influenced somewhat by the Abbé Raynal's *Philosophical History of the Indies*, with its minute description of observations in more southern lands, for he dedicated the first edition of the *Letters* to that writer; but the tendency to record his own observations declared itself very early, and we may fairly claim for him the merit of having been the first "American" to show us these things.

That St. John enjoyed the esteem of his neighbors is shown more clearly by a record not found in his own pages than by the hints in his own telling of the Orange County story. An act was passed March 24, 1772,⁴⁶ by the New York Assembly to raise a sum of money for the purpose of clearing and opening Crommeline's Creek, and for other objects. This, it is expressly stated, is to be paid to "Hector St. John and others."⁴⁷ This seems to show that he had the confidence of his neighbors, and is probably an indication of some degree of initiative and public spirit on his part. It is interesting to inquire who these friends and neighbors were. Prominent among them was Jesse Woodhull,⁴⁸ sheriff of Orange County and better known during Revolu-

⁴⁶ *Laws of New York from 1691 to 1773 inclusive*, N. Y., 1774, p. 709.

⁴⁷ Notice in this connection *Voyage*, I: 79-80.

⁴⁸ "Un de mes anciens amis, homme instruit et des plus respectables de ces cantons" (*Voyage*, I: 235).

tionary days as Colonel Woodhull. The story of his rescue of Crèvecoeur's children will be told later. The Woodhulls had lived formerly on Long Island, but at this time Jesse Woodhull was living at Blagg's Close, not very far from Greycourt. Roger Townsend, who was killed later at the battle of Minisink, is one of the friends whom Crèvecoeur specially names, "one of the best friends whom I have ever had."⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ Tétard lived at almost too great a distance to be called a neighbor. The Ellsworths have already been referred to. John Moffatt lived on land adjoining the Ellsworths' in the region of Goshen court-house, in 1784.⁵¹ He may have been a relative of Hezekiah Moffatt to whom Crèvecoeur sold his farm one year later. Elihu Marvin⁵² lived at Blooming-Grove and was consequently a near neighbor. We might add among his neighbors, the Gilberts, the Yelvertons, John King,⁵³ the first of that name in Orange County, who took up land on the Greycourt tract in 1761, Henry Wisner, who had a powder-mill at Greycourt⁵⁴ but lived about a mile south of Goshen village,⁵⁵ and many others. In the *Voyage* Crèvecoeur mentions further John Allison,⁵⁶ who lived near the Walkill; and Robert de Crèvecoeur adds Samuel Gale (already referred to in connection with the baptism of St. John's children), who lived at Galesborough,

⁴⁹ *Lettres* (1784 edition), I: 311.

⁵⁰ A reference in the *Voyage* (I: 282) suggests that he was proprietor of the Sterling iron-works.

⁵¹ *Independent Journal*, June 9, 1784.

⁵² Marvin came to Orange County in 1743 and lived there until 1803. In 1776 he was chairman of the Committee of Safety for that county, and later Colonel of Militia. He married Abigail, daughter of John Yelverton, of Chester, (*Journal of the Rev. Silas Constant*, p. 5, note).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵⁴ *American Archives*, V: 1499.

⁵⁵ Lamb: *History of the City of New York*, II: 76, note.

⁵⁶ I: 262.

Daniel Everett, a justice of the peace, and Ezechias Howell.⁵⁷ We might add Samuel Verplank who lived at Fishkill, though we should be going rather far from Pine Hill to do so, and perhaps Thomas Moffat who indorsed St. John's application for leave to go to Europe in 1778.⁵⁸ Some of these neighbors turned from Crèvecoeur in his later days at Pine Hill and looked on him with suspicion because he did not throw in his lot with the patriot cause. He was to learn to his sorrow the truth of what he said in the guise of one of his characters in the twelfth "Letter," "As a citizen of a smaller society, I find that any kind of opposition to its now prevailing sentiments, immediately begets hatred: how easily do men pass from loving, to hating and cursing one another!"⁵⁹

A somewhat surprising statement is attributed to John Adams⁶⁰ and Thomas McKean, two ardent patriots and signers of the Declaration of Independence, to the effect that "full one third" of the American people were averse to the Revolution. The Tories, more urbanely called the "Loyalists," have had hard treatment at the hands of American historians, but the non-combatants met a worse fate from their contemporaries. Suspected and harassed by both sides, their lot was pitiable indeed, and calls for more sympathy than it has received, and less contempt. Just how great, during the opening years of the struggle, the predicament was in which a peace-loving and law-abiding colonist was placed, who looked with gratitude and affection toward the land across the sea to which he had but lately sworn allegiance, and to whose protection he owed the shelter of his new home, one may learn from the last of the *Farmer's Letters* on the "Distresses of a Frontier Man." "I am divided," he wrote, "between the respect I feel for the ancient connection, and the fear of innovations, with the

⁵⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 24.

⁵⁸ Clinton Papers, III: 148.

⁵⁹ *Letters*, ed. 1904, p. 287.

⁶⁰ *Works*, X: 63, 87, 110.

consequence of which I am not well acquainted; as they are embraced by my own countrymen . . . as to the argument on which the dispute is founded . . . much has been said and written on both sides, but who has a judgment capacious and clear enough to decide? The great moving principles which actuate both parties are much hid from vulgar eyes . . . nothing but the plausible and the probable are offered to our contemplation.”⁶¹ ⁶² There was certainly no safe course to pursue, as he soon learned, for he met with the traditional fate of the man who wades half-way across the Rubicon and then pauses to look both up and down the stream. There is no doubt that his situation was complicated by a greater understanding than some of his neighbors had of the disorganized and chaotic condition into which the colonies were likely to fall after they had thrown off the restraining hand of the mother country. These considerations and the suffering caused by the suspicion and growing unfriendliness of his neighbors, joined to heart-rending anxiety as to the fate of his family, darkened the last days at Pine Hill, and drew this happy idyl to a sombre close.

⁶¹ *Letters*, 1904, p. 287. ⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 288 — with trivial alterations.

CHAPTER V

THE RETURN TO FRANCE

ST. JOHN had probably projected a journey to France for some time before he made application, early in 1778,¹ for leave to go to New York to set sail. He had requested and received permission from Major Pattison "to send his family by a Flag going up Hudson's River."² But the patriots took alarm at the prospect of his going himself to New York, fearing that he might give information to the enemy. Henry Wisner wrote to Governor Clinton,³ "The people of our county are much alarmed at their apprehensions of St. John's being permitted to go to New York. I asked one of the most sensible of them what damage he could Doe; he observed that he might Advise the Burning of Sterling works in order to prevent our giting the Chain⁴ done. I told him I believed you would Consider well the matter Before you would grant that permission." St. John requested this permission from Governor Clinton and informed the Committee of Cornwall Precinct of the fact.⁵ The

¹ Robert de Crèvecoeur says that he had had it in mind ever since 1773. This seems likely in view of the fact that the "considerable family interests" which led to inquiry being made for him about that time may perhaps have required his presence. See the letter of inquiry (Appendix, pp. 313-314).

² Cited with the items from the Clinton Papers in Online Alexander's *St. John Genealogy*, pp. xiii, xiv.

³ West Point, Feb. 19, 1778 (*Clinton Papers*, Albany, 1900, II: 788).

⁴ The chain that was to be stretched across the river at West Point.

⁵ April 7, 1778 (*Clinton Papers*, III: 148).

committee vouched for him, and two days later, April 9th, he applied for leave to go to Europe, which request was indorsed by Thomas Moffatt.⁶ Clinton received the application soon after, and wrote to General McDougall at Fishkill on the subject. The letter was put into the general's hand by the applicant himself, on the twenty-eighth of the same month. McDougall's reply to the governor was as follows:

"Your favor of the 13th instant on the Subject of leave to Mr. St. John's going to France via of New York, was this day handed to me by Him. As he is a Citizen and you better acquainted with his Political Character than I am, the request he makes must be Submitted to you. If you permit him to go; I wish he may go by Land; and on the west Side, and under Such guards as your own prudence shall suggest. I think his honor should be engaged not to give any Public intelligence to the Enemy; nor to carry any Letters; but shall be first Exhibited to you, or any papers relative to the Public state or Temper of the Country.

I am Dear Sir,

Yr. Humble Serv't.

Alex'r McDougall

He ought not to be allowed to return during the Contest by New York, or any Post in the Hands of the Enemy, nor immediately from New York." ⁷

Whether further difficulties were made in regard to the journey to New York, we cannot tell. Judging from the extreme caution of McDougall's instructions and from the temper of Wisner's letter to Clinton, it seems probable.

During the summer of 1778 it is possible that he was in the neighborhood of Wyoming (Wilkesbarre), for Jefferson wrote in 1787 to M. Soulés⁸ who was at that time engaged in writing his account of the massacre:⁹

⁶ Blooming-Grove, April 9, 1778 (*Clinton Papers*, III: 151).

⁷ *Clinton Papers*, III: 227.

⁸ François Soulés.

⁹ In his *Histoire des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*, Paris, 1787, Vol. III, chap. xvii, pp. 9-17.

"I have had a long conversation with M. Creve-coeur. He knows well that canton. He was in the neighborhood of the place [Wyoming] when it was destroyed, saw great numbers of the fugitives, aided them with his wagons, and had the story from their mouths. He committed notes to writing at the moment, which are now in Normandy, at his father's. He has written for them, and they will be here in five or six days. . . ." ¹⁰

It is natural to inquire how St. John happened to be so far from Pine Hill at this time. It may be that the reason is intimated in the last of the *Farmer's Letters*, where the distressed frontiersman is represented as coming to the decision that the only course left to him and his family is to abandon their home and take refuge among the Indians. Possibly St. John went to this region on the edge of the settlements for the purpose of preparing a retreat for his family from the sufferings to which they were subjected in their old home. If this had been his plan, it seems to have failed. Perhaps the terrible event of the third of July (the Wyoming Massacre) was responsible for its being relinquished.

That his sufferings were far from imaginary may be seen from St. John's own words a little later in a letter to Col. Roger Morris, inspector of the claims of the refugees, in which he refers to "4 Years of Contumely Receiv'd, of Fines Imposed, Emprisonments &." In December, 1778, Thomas Anburey wrote in his *Travels in the United States* (II:262, 264) that he went to Fishkill where he saw the American encampment and the prison in which were a number of unfortunate friends to the Government, who were seized on their plantations, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to

¹⁰ *Works*, ed. H. A. Washington, II: 102-103, 114. Jefferson adds, "He says there will be a great deal to alter in your narration, and that it must assume a different face, more favorable both to the British and Indians. His veracity may be relied on. . . ." A few days later — "I send you the papers M. de Crevecoeur sent to Normandy for . . . You may rely certainly on the author's facts."

the United States, and confined till a sloop of war was ready to take them to New York; "for the Americans are so oppressive, they will not let any one remain neuter; and they compel every inhabitant, either to take the oath, or quit the country." He adds, "When we crossed the river there were two large sloops crowded with people of this description, many of whom, the boatman informed us, had left beautiful homes, with extensive, and well-cultivated plantations." The confinement to which St. John refers in the letter to Morris,¹¹ may have taken place in the Goshen gaol, and at an earlier date, but it is not impossible that St. John was one of these unfortunates alluded to by Anburey, for a statement Crèvecoeur was reported as making in July, 1779¹² seems to point to his having left Orange County early in that year, and we know that by the seventeenth of February, the date of his letter to Morris, he had reached New York.

The letter which St. John addressed to the inspector of the claims of the refugees (Roger Morris) gives some idea of what he had passed through before he had reached the city with his son, and some idea of the destitution to which he was reduced.

"The diffusive Misfortunes of the Times is the only Introduction I have as well as the only Plea I can make for writing you this — Like Great Many others I have rellinquished y^e Conveniencies of Life Property Servants &c, these Incidents however are now become so common that I am very conscious they are less thought of; So many sacrifices of the same kind have been made that the Calamities of each Individual seems to be drowned in the general Mass yet they are not less felt by Each Sufferer; myself & Son are now become Refugees in this Town & find myself obliged to apply to you for the Indulg^{ce} of Rations for us both from this date, the only reward of 4 Years of Contumely Receiv'd, of Fines Imposed, Emprisonments &. the Inclosed letters

¹¹ Written from New York, Feb. 17, 1779. Now in the Royal Institution, at London, Vol. 10, No. 114, see Appendix, p. 315.

¹² *Magazine of American History*, Dec., 1889, p. 512.

from Persons better known to you than myself will I hope Convince You that my Request is founded on Necessity & will enable you to Judge how far I am Justifyable in making this application."

The letter was apparently sent first to William Seton, a Loyalist friend, who forwarded it, with one of his own supporting St. John's claim, to Andrew Elliot, of the Police Office.¹³ Seton wrote:

"I have had the pleasure to be acquainted with M^r. St. John a number of years, and am happy in an opportunity of bearing testimony to his Character as a respectable inhabitant of this Province, a man of letters, and a very accurate topographical knowledge of this Country; . . . During the Rebellion it is well known he has suffered much for his steady attachment to His Majesty's Government and friends; Which now oblige him to be a Refugee in this town with but little means of support; The indulgence he asks of Rations for himself and Son from the time of their coming in, will be a great relief and worthily bestowed."

Elliot endorsed Seton's letter and sent the two to David Mathews, who was at that time mayor of the city. Mathews summed up the matter briefly in a note to Col. Morris, which was received the 17th of March. What the result of the application was we do not learn, but it seems probable that relief was offered, since the request was endorsed by names of such weight.

It is natural to think that St. John may have fallen back on his knowledge of surveying for further support while he was in New York. In a letter to Robert Livingston in 1784¹⁴ he speaks of having once surveyed the spot now known as City Hall Park, and of having given copies of his papers to the Everlasting Club. He does not say when this was made; it may have been earlier, in connection with a scheme

¹³ See *Royal Gazette*, Feb. 17, 1779.

¹⁴ March 8 & 9, 1784, now in the Library at Mantes.

for planting and beautifying the spot,¹⁵ which another letter to Livingston (1784) says that he proposed "15 years ago," that is, in 1769. But remembering St. John's inaccuracy in the matter of dates, and knowing that he surveyed the lands belonging to Trinity Church in the spring or summer of 1779, we are led to conjecture that "The Fields"¹⁶ may have been surveyed about this time also. In Dr. Morgan Dix's *History of the Parish of Trinity Church*,¹⁷ there is a note to the effect that the rector submitted to the board July 6, 1779, a bill which Mr. Horton St. John had presented for surveying the church lands and for making a field-book. An old cash-book belonging to the corporation has the note, a month later:

"Aug. 7, 1779

To cash paid H. St. John's account
per order

L. s. p.

11- 2 -10"

The secretary of the corporation was kind enough to examine for me the memorandum upon which the statement in regard to "Mr. Horton St. John" was based, and found that the Christian name might be read either "Horton" or "Hector." In the index of the Minutes, however, from which the item was taken, he found the name plainly written "Hector." As the secretary adds that no other entry bearing St. John's name could be found on the Trinity books, it seems probable that this is the survey to which Robert de Crèvecoeur refers as taking place in the following summer.¹⁸

¹⁵ Appendix, "Agricola," p. 333.

¹⁶ The name by which the park was then known.

¹⁷ N. Y., 1898, I: 426.

¹⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 62.

Two days after the rector of Trinity church submitted this report,¹⁹ Sir Henry Clinton received a letter from General Pattison, announcing the seizure of "the Person & Papers of Mr. Hector St. John on Long Island." When we remember the anxiety felt by St. John's Orange County neighbors at his being allowed to go through the British lines, and McDougall's special counsel that he be sworn not to reveal any public intelligence to the enemy, his detention by the English seems very surprising. It was not until he had been some time in prison that he learned the cause of his arrest. He had been accused, through an anonymous letter,²⁰ of having corresponded with Washington and of having drawn for him a plan of New York harbor. St. John had been in the habit, for some years previous, of committing to writing such observations as his journeys and his conversations with those whom he met suggested. He had been a surveyor for many years and undoubtedly had many maps and plans among his papers. When he came to New York he apparently brought this collection of manuscript material with him, for a small trunk containing "a great number of manuscripts . . . a sort of irregular Journal of America," was

¹⁹ The full entry reads as follows: "The Rector communicated to the Board a Letter from Mr. Horton or Hector St. John directed to himself inclosing his Field Book of such part of the Church Lands as he surveyed by order of this Corporation, with an account for his services annexed in which he makes some charges without affixing any sum to them and desires by his Letter that the sums might be added at the pleasure of the Vestry, and the same being taken into Consideration. It was thereupon Resolved that Mr. St. John be desired to furnish the Church Wardens with a Compleat Account of his services and other Expenses Attending the said Survey and that the Church Wardens pay the same.

Also Resolved that the Compleating the said Survey be postponed for the present on Account of the Heat of the Weather."

²⁰ See *Lettres* (edition 1784), I: 396.

sent to the house of the Rev. Mr. Brown "where he us'd to reside when he came to New York," and some of his papers were also left with Judge Ludlow and with David Colden, son of the former governor, on Long Island.²¹ It

²¹ These facts were brought to light by a letter written by Major-General Pattison to Sir Henry Clinton, at the time of the arrest (re-printed in the *Mag. of Amer. Hist.* Dec., 1889, pp. 511-512, from the *N. Y. Hist. Soc. Collections*, VII: 90). This letter is so illuminating that it seems worth while to quote it in full:

"New York, July 8, 1779

Sir:

I have the Honor to acquaint you that pursuant to your Excellency's Orders signify'd to me by Lord Cathcart I took the earliest Occasion of having the Person & Papers of Mr. Hector St. John seiz'd & secured — He was on Long Island at the time of my receiving Lord Cathcart's Letter, and I sent for him in a manner that could not raise any suspicion of my Intentions towards him; he immediately came to me and I directed the Town Major and my Aid de Camp Captain Adye to attend him to the house of the Revd. Mr. Brown, where he is us'd to reside when he comes to New York; he there opened for their Inspection a large Trunk, which from their Report, contained nothing but some few News Papers, some Garden Seeds & other trifles; he also put into their hands a bundle of Papers, containing certificates &c. relative to his having been imprisoned & otherwise ill-used for his Attachment to the Government; they likewise found a small Trunk which he had put into the care of Mr. Brown, which they brought to me, it was opened & examined in my presence, and contained a great Number of Manuscripts, the general Purport of which appear to be a sort of irregular Journal of America, & a State of the Times of some Years back, interspersed with occasional Remarks, Philosophical & Political; the tendency of the latter is to favor the side of Government and to throw Odium on the Proceedings of the Opposite Party, and upon the Tyranny of their Popular Government. — I have therefore ordered the Trunk to be sealed up in my own Presence, to be disposed of, as you shall think proper — I have also sent for some Papers, he mentions to have left in the hands of Mr. Judge Ludlow and Mr. David Colden, Son of the late Lieut. Governor of this Province, on Long Island.

The Account Mr. St. John gives of himself is that he is a native of Caen in Normandy, but came into this Country many years ago and

is not hard to see how these papers, descriptive as many of them were, of the country and of the sentiments of the inhabitants, might have given rise to the accusation that was directed against him. He says that he had great trouble while he was among the patriots to keep his manuscripts concealed. It may be that some report of them without a clear knowledge of their contents, got abroad through the indiscretion of those who had seen them. The examination of the papers found at New York seemed to acquit him of suspicion. Whether those sent for from Long Island proved more questionable, we do not know, but it is a fact that he was allowed to remain three months

was naturalized; that he first went into the Mercantile Line, but afterwards bought a farm in Orange County, on which he Settled, but was obliged to quit it about Six Months Ago, & leave his family & property behind, on Account of the Persecution he underwent from his attachment to Government, & that during his leisure hours he amused himself with making such literary Observations as occur'd to him, but which he is convinced will upon Perusal, do him Credit in the opinion of those attached to the King's Government, that he has never kept them secret from those of his Acquaintance who were thus Attached, but took pains & found great Difficulty, whilst among the Rebels, to conceal them; that he has submitted many of them to the Perusal of Lieut. Col. Watson of the Guards, who has occasionally made his own Remarks on them, and can vouch for the Nature of the Contents.

Mr. St. John is well known to many of the principal People in this Place, and offers to give any Security, that he [sic] may be judged necessary, for his good Behaviour & Appearance.—I have the Honor of enclosing a Letter from Mr. Smith concerning him, & beg to know, if it is your Excellency's Pleasure that he be released from the Provost upon Bail

I have the Honor to be

With Great Respect &c.

James Pattison

To His Excellency Sir Henry Clinton''

in the Provost Prison,²² until he was released on bail offered by William Seton and one of his friends at Flushing. There is no indication that St. John was singled out for ill-treatment while he was in confinement, but the tales of horror in regard to the Provost²³ and its infamous gaoler Cunningham are too widely known to allow us to be surprised at hearing that his stay in prison, joined to the hardships of the winter preceding and following his release, permanently weakened his health, and that his death finally resulted from disabilities contracted at this time.²⁴

The first French edition of the *Letters* gives an account of his experience in the Provost.²⁵ His greatest suffering was caused by his anxiety in regard to his little boy whom he had been obliged to leave behind him on Long Island, where St. John was staying at the time of his arrest. An Englishman who was for a short time a fellow-prisoner with St. John, greatly relieved his anxiety by interesting himself, as soon as he was released, in Alexander's welfare, and in addition made every effort to have the father himself discharged on bail, or to have his case brought before a council of war. These efforts and those of other friends were finally successful, and St. John was set free on a thousand guineas' bail. After two weeks spent with the Perrys, who had taken Alexander to their home at Hell-Gate during the father's imprisonment, he returned to New York. From the conclusion of the account in the *Lettres*, one would suppose that the departure for England took place soon after this. Robert de Crèvecoeur, however,

²² The Provost Prison stood in the "Fields" (City Hall Park). It later became the Hall of Records.

²³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 58.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

²⁵ *Lettres*, 1784, I: 389 . . . 418.

basing his account on one of St. John's papers that has not been published,²⁶ tells us that the winter that followed his release was one of great suffering and dire poverty; for he was at the end of his own resources, and his friends, too, were in embarrassment. He found, however, a shelter, such as it was, with two refugees²⁷ who had rented a small building that had been used as a stable and grain-loft. The only employment he was able to find was that of helping the English soldiers at Corlear's Hook knock some old ships to pieces. He was paid, not in money, but in wood, which was all he was able to contribute to the common fund of the establishment. It is not surprising to learn that with the coming of winter he fell ill. The winter of 1779-1780 was exceptionally severe; the river and bay were frozen over for forty days. "Hundreds of people crossed daily on the ice, which was so thick that the artillery was also conveyed across."²⁸ Food and fuel were both scarce in the city. The sufferings of the refugees can be imagined. With the coming of summer St. John recovered his strength to some extent, and it was at this time, Robert de Crèvecoeur thinks, that he surveyed the Trinity lands.²⁹ If so, this was the second time that he had been employed by that corporation. The manuscript which Robert de Crèvecoeur followed stops here. His biographer adds that St. John received permission soon after to sail for Europe, and took passage September first on a ship bound for England, part of a fleet of eighty vessels. The account of this departure in the *Letters* is substantially the same except that it says

²⁶ "Esquisse de ma vie depuis ma sortie de prison à New York en 1779, jusques à mon départ pour l'Irlande de 1er septembre 1780" (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 59, note 1.)

²⁷ John Pickering and his wife, from Albany.

²⁸ Stone: *History of New York City*, p. 254, note.

²⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 62.

that the fleet which included his ship numbered one hundred and ninety vessels.

A letter written twenty-five years later by Crèvecoeur to his son asks, "Do you remember our arrival in Ireland?" and goes on to recall the loss of their ship off that coast, the miracle by which they were saved, and the kindness and hospitality with which they were received in Ireland. They arrived in Dublin in October, but how long a time was spent here we do not know. In May of the following year (1781), St. John sold the manuscript of the *Letters from an American Farmer* to Thomas and Lockyer Davies, in London, for thirty guineas "with promise of a present if the public likes the book." A few days later he left London for Ostend, and reached his old home, August 2, 1781.

CHAPTER VI

IN FRANCE

ABOUT a week after St. John's arrival at his old home, the Countess d'Houdetôt, a friend and neighbor of the Crèvecoeur family at Pierrepont of many years standing, wrote to Franklin in regard to the new comer: "il est français d'origine mais Etably depuis Long-tems dans vôtre pay's sous la protection de vos loix auquel il est fidele il est venû icy voir sa famille apres avoir perdu La plus grande parti de son Bien par la guerre presente, il s'appelle Crevecoeur et est le fils d'un amy de plus de vingt ans de mon Mary et de Moy. je vous demande pour luy toute la Bonté et la protection qui seront en vôtre pouvoir et que les Circonstances pourront permettre."¹ Soon after the despatch of this letter St. John had occasion to make use of his introduction to Franklin² on behalf of five Americans (officers of the *Protector*) who had escaped from an English prison and crossed the Channel in an open boat, landing not far from Pierrepont. "Luckily for me as well as for Them," he wrote to Franklin, "I was Just arrived from N. America: where I have resided twenty-seven years. I brought them to my father's Seat, who Tells me that he had Several Times the pleasure of dining with you at the Count de Hudetot's.

¹ Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, Phila. XXII: 106, August 10, 1781. Translated in *Letters from an American Farmer*, 1904, p. 331.

² Franklin Papers, XXII: 123, August 27, 1781. Reproduced in *Letters from an American Farmer*, 1904, p. 332.

The Capt. of y^e boat readily put them under my Care, thence I brought them here [Caen] & presented them to y^e Count de Blanchy the comandant of this Province, who received them with Kindness and Left them under my Care. . . . ” The five officers were suitably lodged by St. John in a house at Caen whence they wrote to Franklin describing their circumstances and asking for assistance and instructions for their return.³ One of the number learned the day following that his brother was in command of the *Black Princess* and set out to join him. The others planned to go to Lorient as soon as they should hear from Franklin. The interval they passed at the house of St. John’s father. Franklin’s reply came speedily, enclosing a passport and approving their plan to go to Lorient where there were generally vessels belonging to America in which they might sail.⁴ The names of the five refugees are here given as George Little, Samuel Wales, Clement Lemon, Alexander Storey, and Isaac Collins.⁵ A change of plan led to their embarking at Nantes, however, whence they sailed for Newbury, Massachusetts.⁶ In the letter that supplemented their petition,⁷ St. John called Franklin’s attention to the fact that suitable persons ought to be appointed to protect the interests of other refugees in similar

³ Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, LX: 16, August 25, 1781.

⁴ Stevens Collection Franklin Papers, Library of Congress, IV Miscellaneous, No. 873, August 28, 1781.

⁵ A letter from Franklin to Hancock, Sept. 21, 1781 (Stevens Collection Franklin Papers IV: 889), referring to St. John’s assistance to the five men, mentions that they were from Boston. Robert de Crèvecoeur adds that Little was lieutenant of the *Protector* and Storey second lieutenant (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 66, note 1).

⁶ St. John to Franklin, Dec. 5, 1781, Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc. XXIII: 98.

⁷ Aug. 27, 1781, Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc. XXII: 123.

plight, of whom there were many. "... if from the Information you might receive of me from the Count de Houdetot," he says, "you thought me capable of discharging this office, I'd readily accept of it without either fee or Reward, glad on the contrary as a good Frenchman and as a good American to contribute my Mite towards the Success of this good, this usefull revolution." Franklin acknowledged St. John's kindness to the refugees and his offer of further usefulness in this respect, adding that Congress had lately sent out a Consul General⁸ for France, with powers of appointing sub-consuls in the various ports. "The Vessel was unfortunately lost with all on board," he wrote, "But it is probable his Place will soon be supply'd. On his Arrival I shall acquaint him with your generous Proposition."⁹

Two years later almost to a day, St. John received a letter from Caen, from a fellow-townsmen Le Fèvre des Mars,¹⁰ in which that gentleman described his efforts on behalf of an Irish sailor in American employ¹¹ who had escaped from an English prison and landed at Havre. Here, because he had no passport, no money, and no protectors, and because he did not know a word of French, he was imprisoned as an adventurer. But, inasmuch as he was not a prisoner of war, he was removed from the prison at Havre and sent to Caen for examination. At Caen, because he could not make himself understood and because he could not tell the names of the places and prisons where he had been detained, he was considered an imbecile. Later, the authorities shrewdly conjectured, from his having no

⁸ Col. William Palfrey.

⁹ Stevens Collection Franklin Papers, IV Miscellaneous, No. 875, September 2, 1871.

¹⁰ Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, XLVIII: 16. Sept. 1, 1783.

¹¹ John Hammond.

money whatever, that he must be a thief! He was imprisoned accordingly at Bicêtre. When Le Fèvre des Mars heard of the matter he decided that it would be well to investigate the situation, but when he tried to get permission to enter the prison with an interpreter, in order to speak to the prisoner and learn his story, the request was denied. It was not until St. John's name was introduced and the possibility that he would complain to the Intendant of Caen suggested, that the necessary card of admission was obtained. The letter which Le Fèvre des Mars wrote thereupon, telling the story of the poor Irishman's experiences, was sent by St. John to Mme. d'Houdetôt, whose sympathy was so aroused by the account that she forwarded it with a note to Franklin in which she offered, in case there were no funds for the purpose, to supply the necessary means for sending the prisoner to Lorient where he had friends.¹²

These circumstances have been described in some detail because the fact that the latter affair was referred to St. John two years after his offer to act in behalf of refugees which the war might bring to their coast, suggests that he actually did interest himself, whether officially or unofficially, in the fate of such escaped prisoners during the time of his stay in France. There is a further reason for detailing his efforts in this direction, as it was through his kindness to a group of these refugees, the five Bostonians, that he was enabled to trace the whereabouts of his two children whom he had been forced to leave behind in America. Franklin's letter to Hancock, written a few days after he had received the Americans' petition and St. John's accompanying letter, says in regard to the men who had been thus hospitably treated, "They have promised to remit the amount of his

¹² Franklin Papers, American Philosophical Society, XXIX: 129, September 6, 1783.

Disbursements to his Family in Orange County in New York, and he does not doubt their Endeavors to do so." For some reason this part of the latter was scratched out. Perhaps the writer felt that it hardly did justice to St. John's real kindness which would have led him, one feels sure, to have done what he could for the unfortunates, aside from any expectation of service in return. Franklin seems to have felt assured of this, for he continues: "This Friendly & Hospitable Treatment of our People entitles this Gentleman to our Regard; and as he thinks it may be in your Excellency's Power to render him some Service in that Country, I take the Liberty to acquaint you with the above Fact, and that he is much esteemed by Persons of Consideration here."¹³ Robert de Crèvecoeur says at the close of his account of the rescue of the five Americans that St. John asked them to take letters for his family back to America with them and to see that they reached their destination. They explained that, greatly as they should like to serve him, Congress would probably require their services as soon as they returned and that consequently they would not be able to fill the commission themselves. Lieutenant Little, however, promised to ask a relative of his who lived in Boston to undertake the task of finding St. John's wife and children and placing his letters in their hands. The package was accordingly addressed to this gentleman, Capt. Gustavus Fellowes,¹⁴ by whom it was received weeks later. When Capt. Fellowes learned of St. John's kindness to Lieut. Little and his friends, he at once set out for Orange County, determined to repay this kindness if it were possible to find a trace of the unfortunate

¹³ Stevens Collection Franklin Papers, Lib. of Cong., IV Miscell., No. 889, Sept. 21, 1781.

¹⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 65, 66. By a misprint the name appears on page 66 as "Georges."

little family. At Fishkill he met Col. Jesse Woodhull, who was in charge of the garrison at that town. Col. Woodhull was an old friend and neighbor of St. John's, and it happened that the package of letters which Mr. Fellowes was carrying contained one addressed to him. Through this friend the inquirer learned that St. John's wife was dead, but that his two children had been rescued by neighbors at Chester,¹⁵ who had cared for them as well as they could in their own extreme destitution. The children were taken back to Boston by their new protector and treated with the utmost kindness until their father's return as consul to America two years later. There seems to have been an almost poetic justice in this rescue of his children, following as it did in direct consequence of his rescue of the stranded American prisoners. It was unfortunate, however, that he could not speedily have the satisfaction of knowing that his efforts to relieve his children's fate had proved successful. Capt. Fellowes' letter, written in December, 1781, giving the account of his journey, was sent to England with the expectation probably that it would be forwarded to France, but it was returned instead to New York, and only discovered in the post-office there seventeen days after the newly-made consul arrived at his post in November 1783.

During the course of the correspondence between Franklin and St. John in regard to the American refugees, Franklin inquired in some perplexity whether he were the same person as the M. de Crèvecoeur who had been so warmly recommended to him by the Countess d'Houdetôt.¹⁶ St. John wrote in reply:¹⁷

¹⁵ Pine Hill was on the border line between Blooming-Grove and Chester.

¹⁶ Stevens Collection Franklin Papers, Lib. of Cong., IV: 889, Sept. 21, 1781.

¹⁷ Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXII: 163, Sept. 26, 1781.

"Yes Sir I am the Same Person whom Madame La Contesse de Houdetot has been so kind as to mention to you, — the Reason of this mistake proceeds from the Singularity of y^e french Customs; which renders their names allmost arbitrary, & often Leads them to forget their Family ones; it is in consequence of *this*, that there are more alias dictums in this than in any other Country in Europe. the Name of our Family is S^t. Jean, in English S^t. John, a name as antient as the Conquest of England by W^m. the Bastard. —

I am So great a Stranger to the manners of this, tho' my native Country having quitted it very young that I never dreamt I had any other, than the old family name — I was greatly astonished when at my Late return, I Saw myself under the Necessity of being called by that of Crevecoeur. . . ." ¹⁸

Mme. d'Houdetôt also added a word of explanation a few weeks later. Her letter is quoted because it not only reinforces what she had said previously, but makes it clear that she had not yet herself met the man over whose fortunes she was to have so much influence later. It was not, in fact, until early spring in the year following that they met at Paris.

"Celuy qui s'est Recommandé De Ma part aupres De Vous Mon Cher Docteur sous le nom De S^t. Jean est le même que Celuy dont j'ay eû l'honneur de vous parler sous le nom de Crevecoeur que porte son pere Dont je suis l'amie Depuis plus De vingt cinq ans Comme le fils n'habitait pas ce pay's cy je n'ay de luy aucune connaissance personnelle mais j'en ay toujours oui dire du Bien a son pere et c'est a Cause de luy mon cher docteur que je Reclâme vos Bontés pour son fils je scay qu'il est tres attaché aux Etats unis et qu'il a epruvé plus que personne les calamités attachées a la guerre presente je vous demande donc mon Cher Docteur De faire pour luy ce que vos circonstances pourront vous permettre. . . ." ¹⁹

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1781 Crèvecoeur was at Pierrepont and at Caen. In August he speaks of

¹⁸ This statement militates seriously against the identity of Lieut. Crèvecoeur and S^t. John.

¹⁹ Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXIII: 34, October 20, 1781.

having taken the escaped American officers to his father's home, that is, to Pierrepont. Later in the same month he wrote to Franklin from Caen, Rue St. Jean, "At M. Le Mozier, Marchd.," whither Franklin's reply was addressed. Late in September another letter from Franklin is addressed to "Caen Basse Normandie," to which a reply is sent from the same address. December fifth still finds him at Caen,²⁰ but at the close of 1781, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,²¹ the Marquis Turgot²² induced Crèvecoeur to visit him at Paris. The visit had been planned months earlier, for in September Crèvecoeur wrote to Franklin that he hoped during the coming winter to have the pleasure of making his acquaintance, as he expected to pass some time at the house of the Marquis Turgot.^{23 24} A publication that appeared at the beginning of 1782, dated Caen, January first, gives a further hint as to Crèvecoeur's activities during the autumn and early winter of the first year of his return. This is a pamphlet on the cultivation of the Irish potato, which Turgot induced him to publish. The treatise was dedicated to the Duke d'Harcourt, governor of Normandy, and signed "Normanno-Americanus."²⁵ It is possible, although by no means certain, that it was at this date, following the publication of this detailed and careful study,

²⁰ Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXIII: 98. For some reason this letter has been annotated as belonging to the year 1782 rather than 1781. The events referred to in the letter took place in 1781, the year there given.

²¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 68.

²² An aunt of the marquis had married Crèvecoeur's uncle and godfather, Michel-Jacques Blouet.

²³ Brother of the comptroller general.

²⁴ Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXII: 163, September 26, 1781.

²⁵ See Chapter X, "Crèvecoeur as an Agriculturalist," pp. 161-174, for further details in regard to the potato pamphlet.

that Crèvecoeur was admitted to the Agricultural Society at Caen. M. Laër, in an account of the society published at Caen in 1827, gives Crèvecoeur's name among those of the first members in 1763. This, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,²⁶ is an error, because at that time he was too obscure an individual and too far away to warrant his admission into a society which included the most distinguished citizens of Caen.²⁷

With his journey to Paris Crèvecoeur entered upon a new and interesting phase of experience. Étienne-François Turgot, Marquis de Soumont, was a member of the Academy of Science and of the Royal Agricultural Society. His sister had married Paul-Hippolyte de Beauvilliers, Duke de Saint-Aignan,²⁸ who was a distinguished soldier and a member of the French Academy. At their house Turgot and his protégé dined twice a week, and twice a week also at the Count de Buffon's. In the society of the scientists and men of letters gathered there, Crèvecoeur must have found much to enjoy. It was at the house of M. Buffon, he says,²⁹ during the long winter evenings that he rediscovered the grace and beauty of his native language, a language which he had forgotten how to use during his long residence in America.

²⁶ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 67, note 3.

²⁷ Is it not possible, however, that he might indeed have been included among the early members, inasmuch as he was actually pursuing experiments in agriculture for himself in the new world during those years, and for that reason might be expected to be able to send interesting information in regard to agricultural conditions in that country, to the society of Caen? One might account for his being mentioned among the early members of the society by assuming that he may have returned to Caen in 1763. The date of his settlement at Greycourt he gave as 1764, and he was not naturalized until 1765, so there is nothing to preclude this possibility, although, it is only fair to add, there is also nothing to support it.

²⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 68, note 3.

²⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 69.

About three months after his arrival at Paris, he received a note from the Countess d'Houdetôt saying that she would like to see him. Knowing that Mme. d'Houdetôt was herself highly educated and connected with the most distinguished savants in Paris, Crèvecoeur felt diffident about accepting her invitation. He wrote to her, accordingly, acknowledging her invitation, but postponing its acceptance to some indefinite date on the score of indisposition. The letter, written first in English and then translated as well as might be into French, seems to have piqued the great lady's curiosity, for she wrote again, urging him to call upon her as soon as he should be entirely recovered. More than a month passed; Crèvecoeur hoped that the matter might be forgotten and overlooked, but presently her secretary arrived bearing a letter which made further delay in acceding to her wishes discourteous, so, taking his courage between both hands, Crèvecoeur presented himself at the hotel d'Houdetôt.

Élisabeth-Sophie-Françoise de la Live de Bellegarde was born December 18, 1730.³⁰ She was left motherless at the age of ten and was thenceforth under the care of her aunt Mme. d'Esclavelles, by whom she was educated. At eighteen she married the Count d'Houdetôt who was described by her sister-in-law, Mme. d'Epinay, as "a young man of quality but without fortune; aged twenty-two, a gambler, ugly as the devil, and little advanced in the service; in fact, unknown, and, to all appearance, made to be so."³¹ In spite, however, of Mme. d'Epinay's estimate of his capacity, the Count rose to the rank of lieutenant general in the French army. Their union seems to have been an eighteenth century marriage of convenience, since at the time it occurred M. d'Houdetôt had a liaison which lasted many years after his

³⁰ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 327, note 1.

³¹ *Nation*, June 6, 1901, Vol. 72, p. 451.

marriage, while Mme. d'Houdetôt's connection with Saint Lambert³² began only a short time afterward and continued for more than fifty years. Readers of the *Confessions* know Mme. d'Houdetôt through her relations with Rousseau which lasted nine months. When Rousseau was indiscreet enough, in later life, to publish this episode and also the account of Mme. d'Houdetôt's connection with Saint Lambert, William Short, Jefferson's secretary, wrote in 1789:

"The only book that has been read here for some time except those relative to the revolution, is the continuation of Rousseau's confessions — as it treats of persons well known here, many of whom are still living it is read with unexampled avidity — the secret history of M^{de}. D'Houdetot and S^t. Lambert, & Rousseau's passion for the former, is stated fully — I have not seen her since its appearance — it is difficult to say whether she will not be pleased with what is said — she is represented in such flattering colors that most people imagine few women in Paris would be displeased to be treated in that manner — she is there the model of fidelity to her lover though absent — & that as you know is the only fidelity which is valued here."³³

Mme. d'Houdetôt herself, however, referred seldom to the episode. She said simply that much exaggeration was to be found in Rousseau's memoirs. If accuracy was wanting in his own *Confessions*, she added, it was still more wanting when he attempted to give the confessions of other people.^{34 35}

At the time when the Countess began to influence Crèvecoeur's fortunes she was about fifty years old. According to the accounts which contemporaries have given of her

³² Author of *Les Saisons*.

³³ Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 2, vol. 75, no. 49, November 30, 1789.

³⁴ See *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*.

³⁵ Students of Rousseau will be interested to know that before leaving for England the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* sent to Mme. d'Houdetôt the eight volumes written in his own hand. Crèvecoeur says that he was often impressed by the fine writing of the manuscript when he used to examine it in the library at Sannois. (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 330.)

appearance, she was never beautiful, although she seems to have fascinated the circle which surrounded her by the charm of her conversation and by her genuine kindliness. "She was born plain," one who knew her wrote,³⁶ "of a repulsive plainness with a cast in her eyes. . . ." After further details the writer added, however, that one soon forgot her incomparable ugliness in the activity of her mind, the power and the charm which distinguished her. Nothing was more unforeseen, more delicate, more piquante, he declared, than her conversation. Mme. de Rémusat adds her tribute. "It is impossible to carry further than did Madame d'Houdetot, I will not say goodness, but kindness. Goodness requires a certain discernment of evil; it sees and forgives it. Mme. d'Houdetot never observed it in anybody. We saw her actually suffer when the smallest blame was expressed before her, and on such occasions she imposed silence in a manner which was not disobliging, but which simply manifested the pain that she felt."³⁷ This characteristic, so wanting ordinarily in the conversation of a clever woman, ought, alone, to have served to distinguish her.

Franklin, while American ambassador, was among those who felt the power of Mme. d'Houdetôt's charm. A few months before recommending Crèvecoeur to Franklin's notice, she had entertained the great man at her home at Sannois, near Paris, at a fête champêtre.³⁸ For at least six years after this time letters continued to pass between them.³⁹ Jefferson, in his turn, when he succeeded Franklin, became one of her circle of admirers and was often to be

³⁶ Norvius, quoted by W. P. Andrews, *Nation*, Nov. 26, 1903, Vol. 77, p. 422.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 423.

³⁸ See Sparks' *Life and Works of Benjamin Franklin*, IX: 22-24.

³⁹ See letter from Franklin to Mme. d'Houdetôt, Stevens Collection Franklin Papers, Lib. of Cong., Vol. VIII, April 17, 1787.

seen in her salon, which he declared to be one of the most agreeable in Paris.⁴⁰ Later, he and Mme. d'Houdetôt were associated in kind efforts in behalf of Crèvecoeur's sons when their father was recalled to the United States. During the days when Josephine was living in the rue de la Victoire, the Countess was one of her intimates.⁴¹ Men and women to the end esteemed and loved her and, with few exceptions, regarded her as a paragon of benevolence and attractiveness. However differently she might be judged by present standards, it must be conceded that she possessed great influence and used it with unfailing kindness. She died, holding in hers the hand of M. de Somma Riva⁴² who, after the death of Saint Lambert in 1803, took his place in her affections. At the death of his patroness, in 1813, Crèvecoeur wrote for his daughter-in-law⁴³ a running memoir of Mme. d'Houdetôt, covering seventeen closely written quarto pages. Quotations from this have already been made, and Robert de Crèvecoeur has further used the document in the fifth and seventh chapters of his biography. Readers who are interested in Mme. d'Houdetôt will find several pages of these memoirs reproduced in the *Vie et Ouvrages* (pages 326 to 331), together with twenty-one of her poems (pages 333-348).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 431.

⁴¹ Imbert de Saint-Amand, *Citizeness Bonaparte*, transl. Thomas S. Perry, N. Y., 1890, p. 225.

⁴² Former president of the sub-Alpine republic.

⁴³ Alexander's wife.

⁴⁴ Besides the articles already quoted, many notices are to be found in the letters and memoirs of the time. See, e.g. Marmontel, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1818, II: 128; *Memoirs of Mme. de Rémusat*, 1802-1808, transl. by Hoey & Lillie, N. Y., 1894, p. 67; *Diary of Gouverneur Morris* . . . ed. by Anne Cary Morris, N. Y., 1888, I: 250-251, 258, 260. Fuller accounts are contained in Buffenoir's life of Mme. d'Houdetôt; Gilbert Stenger's *La Société française pendant le consulat*, Vol. III, pp. 369-385; Descure's *Les femmes philosophes*.

No one was readier to tell how much he owed to this remarkable woman than Crèvecoeur himself. She made of him "a new man," to translate his own words.⁴⁵ "What rapid progress in knowledge of French," he exclaims, "and in the ways of the world, the desire of meriting the good opinion of this new friend caused me to make!"⁴⁶ Not long after his first visit he was invited to become her guest, and was soon on the footing of an old friend. It was probably some time in May when he was invited to take up his residence at the hotel d'Houdetôt.⁴⁷ Here, in addition to Saint Lambert and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, who later became so active in Crèvecoeur's behalf, the new-comer met the families of Beauvau, Necker, Liancourt, Breteuil, Rohan-Chabot, d'Estissac and many others. About the same time, too, he says in his memoirs of the Countess, he made the acquaintance of Marmontel, La Harpe, Delille, d'Alembert, Suard, Grimm and Rulhière.⁴⁸ With his new friend he made expeditions to libraries, galleries, concerts, theatres, and to the homes of her friends. Yet it would be a mistake to think of Crèvecoeur simply as a protégé of Mme. d'Houdetôt. As a citizen of the country toward which the sympathies of the French were so strongly drawn, and as an unusually well-informed man in regard to Great Britain's former colonies, as the author, furthermore, of a successful book

⁴⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 71.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ A letter from Crèvecoeur to Franklin, dated March 30, 1782, is written from the "hotel Turgot" (Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXIV: 158), so he could not have removed to the home of his patroness before April, in any case. According to Robert de Crèvecoeur, Mme. d'Houdetôt's invitation to call upon her was sent about three months after Crèvecoeur's arrival in Paris at the end of 1781. More than a month passed, (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 71), before it was renewed, which suggests that the change of residence was made about the middle of May.

⁴⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 71.

on that country which had appeared earlier in this same year and been extensively quoted in English reviews, Crèvecoeur was entitled to the cordiality and good offices of his French friends on his own account.

The *Letters from an American Farmer* had been sold in London to Thomas and Lockyer Davies, May 20, 1781, for thirty guineas "with promise of a present if the public likes the book."⁴⁹ The public had no opportunity to judge of its merits until early in the following year (1782) when it was brought out by the firm referred to. In the same year an edition in smaller form⁵⁰ appeared in Dublin with the name of John Exshaw^{51 52} as publisher. When in the year following, the English firm re-issued the book in a form exactly like that of 1782, except for the addition of an index, an Irish edition also appeared at Belfast in duodecimo.⁵³ It would seem, therefore, from the appearance of four editions, or re-prints, within twelve months' time, that the public "liked the book," and it is to be hoped that the author received his "present." That the critics also received the work favorably is suggested by the fact that during the year 1782 no less than nine English and Irish reviews published extensive quotations from it, accompanied sometimes by critical comment.⁵⁴ In the form in which the book first appeared, Crèvecoeur represented himself as of English protestant descent, contrary to the now well-known facts of the case. It is not surprising that he should

⁴⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 64, note 2.

⁵⁰ 12 mo.

⁵¹ Not "Enshaw," as sometimes given.

⁵² This is described by Robert de Crèvecoeur (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 295), who quotes Sabin, as having two maps. The Exshaw edition, 1782, in my possession corresponds in every particular to the edition here described except in regard to the maps. It contains no maps at present, nor any indication that it originally did so.

⁵³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 295.

⁵⁴ See list of re-prints from Crèvecoeur's works, pp. 346-350.

not have chosen to reveal his nationality in a book published in England and before the peace. Anyone, moreover, who reads much of Crèvecoeur's writing soon realizes that, like other authors, he often uses the first person without strictly biographical intention, merely to add vividness to adventures or circumstances which he is describing. This proceeding, however, was severely criticized by an English clergyman, Samuel Ayscough,⁵⁵ who published early in 1783 a ferocious attack⁵⁶ upon the "*American Farmer*." Having learned that the author of these *Letters* was not, as he claimed to be, an English protestant, but a French catholic, his critic went on, logically enough perhaps, to doubt whether he was even a farmer, and even further to attack the writer's trustworthiness. This attempt to discredit the work of a writer who not infrequently idealized conditions in the new world, thus inducing English men and women to emigrate thither at a time when the mother country was suffering from such depletion, was probably patriotic and conscientious in intention. It does not seem to have prevented Crèvecoeur's book, nevertheless, from being widely read and enjoyed; it may even have served to make the volume better known by arousing the curiosity of the public with regard to it.

During the summer of 1782⁵⁷ a friend of Crèvecoeur's, Gui-Jean Baptiste Target,⁵⁸ of whom more will be heard later, was commissioned by the author to send a copy of the *Farmer's Letters* to Franklin. The book is not referred to by name in Target's letter which accompanies it,⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Librarian of the British Museum.

⁵⁶ *Remarks on the Letters from an American Farmer* . . . London, 1783.

⁵⁷ July 13, 1782; see Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXV: 118.

⁵⁸ A noted lawyer; born 1733, died 1806. He is often confused with Turgot by Crèvecoeur's biographers.

⁵⁹ January 3, 1783; see Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXVII: 6.

but a letter from Crèvecoeur in the following year refers to his having sent the *Letters from an American Farmer* to Franklin in July.⁶⁰ A letter from Target to Franklin two weeks later,⁶¹ referring to the pleasure he himself has had in reading the *Farmer's Letters*, tells us that Crèvecoeur had left Paris and gone to Caen, where he was staying with a relative, M. Duperré de Lisle. A letter from Mme. d'Houdetôt to Franklin somewhat later,⁶² suggests that Crèvecoeur spent the summer at Caen.⁶³ She mentions in her letter that Crèvecoeur is anxious to know whether Franklin has received a book which he sent to him "sur les troubles et les Désastres De l'Amérique." Although this phrase is not an accurate description of the *Farmer's Letters*, it applies certainly to part of the book and probably refers to the volume forwarded by Target about three months earlier.

The success of his book in England led Crèvecoeur's friends, especially Mme. d'Houdetôt and the Princesse de Beauvau, to urge him to publish the book in France. As that involved the translation of the entire volume into French, Crèvecoeur shrank from the task because of the uncertainty he still felt in the use of his native language. Nevertheless he yielded to the importunity of his friends and set to work. Much of the summer of 1782 must have been devoted to this undertaking. By January of the following year, Lacretelle, who stood sponsor to the translation, inserted a passage from it in the *Mercure de France*,

⁶⁰ A few months earlier (March, 1782), Crèvecoeur, in company with Mme. d'Houdetôt, had dined at the ambassador's; see Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXVII: 6.

⁶¹ July 31, 1782; see Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXV: 145.

⁶² Oct. 18, 1782, according to the translation in *Letters*, 1904, p. 340.

⁶³ "L'adresse De M. De Crevecoeur est chez M^r. De Lile Lieutenant general Du Baillage a Caen." (Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXVI: 43.)

with a short comment on the book as a whole.⁶⁴ The article was read with interest, but the publication of the book, which was intended to follow this announcement, met with an unfortunate check — the manuscript was stolen. Crèvecoeur refers to this loss of his papers in a letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld:⁶⁵ “[Le ministre] designera peut estre se ressouvenir que ils ont esté enlevé des bureaux de M. de Névillle l’été passé.” Undaunted by this disaster, however, he set to work again, and in a short time re-translated the entire book, with the various changes and additions which appear in the second edition of the *Farmer’s Letters*. When the new translation was finished, it was sent to the Prince de Beauvau, by whom it was given to M. de Vergennes, the minister for foreign affairs. The minister promised to return it in a week, but after three weeks had passed and nothing had been heard from it, Crèvecoeur wrote in some anxiety to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld begging him to ask the Prince to request its return.⁶⁶ Two weeks later Crèvecoeur wrote that he had at last received plenary indulgence from M. de Vergennes, that the Prince de Beauvau had promised to get the necessary endorsement from “M. Le Garde des Sceaux,” and that M. de Saint Lambert had undertaken to keep an eye on the proofs, which Lacretelle had offered to read, and to make a bargain with the bookseller Cuchet, who was to publish the *Letters* in their new dress. Saint Lambert and Target have charge of the matter from now

⁶⁴ The letter is dated January 4, 1783. The fragment published in the *Mercure*, relating to Walter Mifflin’s manumission of his slaves, does not appear in the English original of the *Farmer’s Letters*.

⁶⁵ August 7, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.

⁶⁶ “Je n’ay nulle Impatience, mais Je crains une Détention Eternelle. — Si cela arrivait, ils seroient alors Eternellement Perdus, & voila deux fois que Je les traduis et les copie.” (Aug. 7, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.)

on, he adds, and by January of the following year he hopes that he may receive the first copies. "God knows," he says, "what the public will think of a work so full of errors of grammar and of diction, the greatest ornaments of a book."⁶⁷ In spite of the Minister's sanction of his work, Saint Lambert was obliged to write to the author that the Keeper of Seals [M. Gaillard] had objected to certain things in the book as too daring and that he had also found the book too long. Crèvecoeur exclaimed in disgust that he was well aware of the book's shortcomings but that if all that was daring and all that was prosy were removed not much would be left.⁶⁸ As for what was too bold, Crèvecoeur suggested that the use of the word "Philadelphia" would cover a multitude of sins. He was anxious, he added, not to make extensive retrenchments because both Franklin and Jay had told him that they believed the book, just as it stood, would win for him the esteem of the Americans, something which he desired on his own account and also for the sake of his children. If, however, the authorities absolutely forbade its publication, Crèvecoeur said that he would re-translate it and bring it out at Philadelphia, where censorship was unknown. At the beginning of the following year,⁶⁹ Lacretelle wrote to the editor of the *Mercure*, a letter from which the following sentences are translated: — "An unfortunate and unexpected accident has delayed the publication of this work. The manuscript was lost at the moment it was to be published. The author has, accordingly, had to do his work over again. This new work is now in press. I beg you, Sir, to inform the

⁶⁷ Aug. 23, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.

⁶⁸ "Si il faut soustraire ce que on appelle *hardi* — & ce qu'on appelle Longeurs, c'est-à-dire, Imperfections — certainement il ne restera pas grand choses." (September 3, 1783; in the Library at Mantes).

⁶⁹ January 24, 1784; see *Lettres*, 1784, Vol. I, XXII.

public of this fact, in order to prevent foreign booksellers from making use of the original manuscript." During the course of the year the book finally made its appearance and seems to have met at once with great success.⁷⁰ So large was its sale that a few years later a new edition was called for, to which Crèvecoeur added a third volume.⁷¹

Crèvecoeur could hardly have hoped to hear before the beginning of 1782 from the letters which he had sent to America by George Little the previous summer, for the five officers did not receive their passports until nearly the first of September. Captain Fellowes, to whom they were delivered, replied in December,⁷² but the letter, as has been explained, did not reach its destination. As January and February went by without response, Crèvecoeur must have felt greatly discouraged. Probably he had tried again to get word from his family, for in March, 1782, he wrote to Franklin asking him how to direct letters either to Philadelphia or to Boston. He added "so many letters have hitherto miscarried for want of care in those in whose hands I had Placed them, that I find myself forced to ask you, what means I shall make use of: & whether you'd not permit me to send them to your office, whence in due Time & more safely, they might be conveyed to America; my frequent disappointments on that head are the cause of my Taking this Freedom, which I beg, you'd excuse:"⁷³ Through Mme. d'Houdetôt he later sent other

⁷⁰ See *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 83; also a letter from Mme. d'Houdetôt to Crèvecoeur's son, dated Jan. 1, 1785, p. 353, "Le livre de votre bon papa est en vente et a le plus grand succès et le plus flatteur. . . ." The use of the phrase "en vente" at this time, suggests that the book had not long been published.

⁷¹ "Le succès de ce livre avait été si grand, si durable, qu'une réimpression était devenue nécessaire." (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 119.)

⁷² See p. 64.

⁷³ Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXIV: 158, March 30, 1782.

despatches,⁷⁴ but nothing had been heard from them. Since his departure from New York in September, 1780, no word of any kind had been received from his family nor from his friends in America.⁷⁵ It is not hard to imagine, therefore, with what anxiety Crèvecoeur must have looked forward to the conclusion of peace between Great Britain and her colonies, and to the opportunity of return to America which it would afford.

When the commissioners finally arrived at Paris the peace negotiations completely occupied public attention. "Depuis ce moment on ne s'occupa plus dans toutes les sociétés que de ce grand et important objet," Crèvecoeur wrote in his memoirs of Mme. d'Houdetôt.⁷⁶ Even Mme. d'Houdetôt herself, who was not interested ordinarily in political affairs, entered into the discussion of the proceedings of the commissioners and still further surprised her friend by going repeatedly to Versailles. The object of these expeditions Crèvecoeur learned upon receipt of a request from the Maréchal de Castries, the minister of marine. This request was for a detailed report of conditions in the colonies relative to their geography, agriculture, industries, etc. Crèvecoeur had been recommended to the Minister by the Countess as a man well-fitted to supply this needed information. Her recommendation, supported by that of the Princess de Beauvau, was justified by what followed. At her advice Crèvecoeur went at once to Versailles, where the Count's apartment was placed at his disposal. Here, assisted by two secretaries, he worked for seven weeks at his report. This report gave such satisfaction to the Minister that he announced

⁷⁴ See letter, October 18, 1782, Franklin Papers, Amer. Phil. Soc., XXVI: 43.

⁷⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 76.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

his intention of having it bound in order to preserve it.⁷⁷ The king, he added, was especially pleased with the geographical information the report contained, and the excellent English maps which accompanied it. The approbation of the king and of the minister cannot fail to have gratified Crèvecoeur, and it must have been a satisfaction to him to have been able to serve them, but his labors were to have a more substantial reward. The Maréchal de Castries promised that as soon as the list of consuls and vice-consuls for America should be drawn up and presented for the king's approval, Crèvecoeur's name should appear first among the candidates. When asked which post he should prefer, it is not surprising to learn that Crèvecoeur chose that of New York, the province in which he had lived longest and which he knew best. On the twenty-second of June his nomination was signed, and on the ninth of July he received formal announcement of his appointment to the consulship of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.⁷⁸

During the time that he was at work upon his report, and as long as he remained at Versailles after its completion, Crèvecoeur saw many friends new and old. The

⁷⁷ Unfortunately Robert de Crèvecoeur could find no trace of this among the archives of the marine at the Foreign Affairs Office. A request for a pension which Crèvecoeur presented March 10, 1793, however, seems to refer to such an elaborate document and to confirm what has been given above. "Le ministre de la marine ayant entendu parler du long séjour que j'avais fait dans les colonies anglaises, m'employa à lui communiquer les connaissances que j'avais acquises sur les mâtures, bois de construction, munitions navales, positions des havres, profondeurs des eaux, ainsi que sur les détails géographiques des côtes maritimes et des parties intérieures de l'Amérique septentrionale" (Archives des Affaires étrangères, Carton du Consulat de New-York, quoted *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 79, note 1).

⁷⁸ The post at New York was much desired. Crèvecoeur says that there were seventeen applicants, all well-supported, for this particular consulate (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 79).

Duke d'Harcourt, governor of Normandy, the Baron de Breteuil, minister of the king's household, du Breuil who had charge of the hospital at Saint Germain, and the Princess de Beauvau were among those whom he often saw. Here, too, he met Lafayette, perhaps for the first time.⁷⁹ The Maréchale de Beauvau sent for him every Sunday to dine with her at Le Val⁸⁰ where most of the ministers were accustomed to meet. Crèvecoeur made use of his frequent interviews with the Maréchal de Castries to suggest a project which may have grown out of his own difficulty in hearing from his family and his friends in America. This was the creation of regular communication between France and the United States. As a special chapter has been devoted to this service, which Crèvecoeur was instrumental in founding, it is not advisable to enter here into the details of its establishment. To him the two countries owed its inauguration and its continuance, in spite of interruption, for a period of nearly nine years, — roughly speaking, from the close of our revolution to the outbreak of the revolution in France.

In the weeks that intervened between the signing of his appointment in midsummer and his actual departure, which did not take place until autumn, Crèvecoeur was occupied in arranging for the publication of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, in bidding farewell to his family at Caen, in making preparations for the long voyage to America, and in setting the affairs of the packets in order. So many difficulties arose in regard to the licensing of his book that the matter had to be left, finally, as has been seen, in the hands of Saint Lambert and Target.⁸¹ Early

⁷⁹ Letters to Washington, Lib. of Cong., Vol. 65; 53, Nov. 30, 1783.

⁸⁰ In the forest of Saint Germain.

⁸¹ See pp. 76-77.

in July, probably, he went to Caen to say good-bye to his father and to Alexander, who was to remain in France. At Caen the great electric storm of the tenth of July led to his inducing the Intendant and more than twenty others to fortify their dwellings with lightning-rods.⁸² This invention of Franklin's had greatly interested Crèvecoeur. It was probably somewhat earlier than this that he had helped to install the great mast fitted with a rod and a conductor in the courtyard at Le Val, home of the Maréchal de Beauvau.⁸³ One of the preparations for his voyage included giving instructions for the erection of a lightning-rod on the ship which was to carry him to America.⁸⁴

In making arrangements for his journey, the poor consul was much embarrassed by lack of funds. Although his salary was supposed to begin the first of June, by the third of September he had received nothing except the privilege of free transportation in the packet and the promise of 3000 livres in advance. These "are or will be payable you know where," the minister wrote,⁸⁵ but as Crèvecoeur was unable to guess the conundrum he was unfortunately unable to benefit by the king's generosity, and so had to relinquish the pleasure of going to Paris to take leave of his friends. Instead, he was obliged to go to Lorient to inspect the ships that had been selected for the service.

A letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld⁸⁶ a few days before sailing, breathes discouragement

⁸² See letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Aug. 7, 1783, in the Library at Mantes.

⁸³ See account of this, *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 73.

⁸⁴ See letter of August seventh, just referred to.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Louis-Alexandre de la Roche-Guyon and de la Rochefoucauld d'Enville was born July 11, 1743. At the time of the beginning of his

in regard to the new packet service. "Je vous confesse que mon Zèle est bien diminué — Je ne puis tout vous dire, Letabliss^t. de ces 5 vaisseaux ne durera pas deux ans. mon projet simple et utile est devenu une affaire de mode, de fast, de luxe et de dépense —." "Plus de 40,000 [livres] ont été dépensé in fitting out these Vessels—indiennes, glaces, peintures, Jay ordre de faire faire des tables d'acajou, il faut que je devienne Le caissier & comment payer. . . ." "Ah! si Javois seul^t. 200 Livres de rente Je retournerois cultiver mes terres & mes amis & deviendrait consul qui voudroit."⁸⁷ Added to discouragement in regard to the packet service and to disappointment at not being able to see again the friends at Paris who had done so much for him was regret at leaving his little son, his "compagnion d'infortune," as he calls him. The Countess d'Houdetôt, with her customary kindness, endeavored to do what she could to reassure him in regard to the child, promising to have Alexander spend a month with her at Paris during the winter. In his farewell letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Crèvecoeur begged his friend to let the boy come and see him during this promised visit. "If I can only

acquaintance with Crèvecoeur (which was probably in the spring of 1782), he was about forty years old. He was greatly interested in the infant republic across the sea and in 1783 published a translation of the new constitution of the thirteen states. His interest in representative government led to his being appointed one of the députés to the États Généraux in 1788. In 1791 he was president of the Council of Paris. In September of the following year he was assassinated at Gisors. A large number of letters from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld are to be found in the Library at Mantes. They extend from the summer of 1783 to the close of 1788. These letters which have not, so far as I know, been examined by previous biographers of Crèvecoeur, throw much light on the first few years of his consulship and give valuable information in regard to the commerce of the early days of the republic.

⁸⁷ Letter of Sept. 16, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.

live long enough to be able to have him where I am," he adds wistfully, "I shall say, 'Nunc Dimittis servum tuum, Domine.'"⁸⁸

The first of the packets to sail, the *Courrier de l'Europe*, which carried the new consul to his post, made the trip in fifty-four days.⁸⁹ As the *Courrier* arrived at New York the 19th of November, this would seem to indicate that it left France the twenty-sixth of September. But the *Pennsylvania Packet* (December 6, 1783) reports that the ship met with such violent weather that after being eight days at sea she had been obliged to put back to the port whence she had sailed,⁹⁰ which may mean that the ship cleared originally on the eighteenth.⁹¹ A few days before sailing, the ship had received a fresh coat of paint. This, added to the "extreme bad weather," must have made the first week of the voyage royally uncomfortable. Crèvecoeur had taken the precaution to buy a hammock which he slung in the sailors' quarters, for the fumes in the cabin were insupportable. By touching port again, the ship was enabled to bring away the Definitive Treaty which had just arrived from Paris.

Besides John Thaxter,⁹² bearer of the treaty, and Crèvecoeur himself, the *Courrier* carried "several other distin-

⁸⁸ Translated from the letter last referred to.

⁸⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 85. See also the *New York Packet & American Advertiser*, Nov. 20, 1783.

⁹⁰ This was Port Louis, near Lorient, according to Crèvecoeur's account of his voyage given in the third volume of the 1787 edition of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur*.

⁹¹ For the further confusion of his biographers, Crèvecoeur speaks in the account just quoted of having been fifty-seven days at sea when their pilot was received on board, adding that it was thirty-nine hours later before they landed — a voyage altogether of more than fifty-eight days.

⁹² Secretary to Mr. Adams.

guished people.”⁹³ One of these, according to the Abbé Mably who gives a few details in regard to the voyage,⁹⁴ was Philippe de Létombe, consul for France at Boston. A letter from Létombe to Crèvecoeur among the Crèvecoeur papers at Paris,⁹⁵ shows that this statement is erroneous, however, for the letter was written from Boston, November 20, 1783 (the day after the arrival of the packet at New York), and addressed to Crèvecoeur at Paris. Even if one were to suppose the impossible — that the consul could have made the journey from New York to Boston in one day and then have found time to go to see Crèvecoeur’s children, about whom he writes — one cannot believe that the letter would have been directed to France by a correspondent who knew his friend to be at that time in America. Among Crèvecoeur’s fellow-passengers may have been Barbé-Marbois, consul general from France to the thirteen states. The *Connecticut Gazette*,⁹⁶ commenting upon the arrival of the first of the packets, says that it brought “two French consuls, one to reside at Philadelphia and the other at New York.” Since Marbois’ headquarters were at Philadelphia and there was no vice-consul for that port, it may be he to whom reference is here made. A short time before leaving France,⁹⁷ Crèvecoeur wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld that two vice-consuls were to go by the packet. The vice-consuls appointed after the peace were Laforest, Toscan, Petry and Oster. Laforest did not reach America until the fifth of December, on

⁹³ See the newspaper entitled *Courrier de l’Europe*, for January 2, 1784.

⁹⁴ *Observations sur le gouvernement et les loix des États-Unis de l’Amérique*, Amsterdam, 1784, III: 250.

⁹⁵ Analyzed, *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 352.

⁹⁶ December 5, 1783.

⁹⁷ September 7, 1783.

the second packet to leave France.⁹⁸ Toscan signed a notice in a Boston paper so late as February, 1783, which makes it seem unlikely that he had gone to France and returned by November. Consequently the "two vice-consuls" probably refer to Petry, appointed to Wilmington, North Carolina, and Oster, whose post was at Richmond.

Toward the close of the long voyage, Crèvecoeur wrote,⁹⁹ the passengers were gathered on the bridge one afternoon, watching the fury of the waves under the high northwest wind. In some discouragement they were discussing the difficulty of reaching their journey's end at that tempestuous season, when one of the passengers declared that he had a presentiment that they would have a pilot on board within twenty-four hours. The captain, Cornic du Moulin, maintained that this was exceedingly unlikely, for the appearance of the sky and of the sea promised, rather, a renewal of the gale. Nevertheless the wind diminished during the night and the sea grew quieter. The following morning the ship's company were surprised to find themselves in the midst of a fleet of English vessels outward bound. The commodore's boat came alongside and the lieutenant asked the *Courrier's* captain if they were bound for New York. Du Moulin replied that they were, but that he was afraid that the adverse wind would prevent their making port. The English officer then went on to say that the wind had been so high when they passed Sandy Hook that they had been unable to set their pilot on shore. He offered to transfer him to the French ship if they wished to have him do so, an offer which they gladly accepted. The following day the wind shifted to a favorable quarter,

⁹⁸ *Rivington's New York Gazette*, December 17, 1783, speaks of "M. de la Forest, consul for the state of Georgia" as "one of the many passengers" arrived in the *Courier de New York*.

⁹⁹ *Lettres*, 1787, III.

and the pilot was able to bring them, thirty-seven hours later, to Sandy Hook. It was two o'clock when they passed the light-house, and half-past four when they anchored in front of the city in a forest of masts and vessels in which the English were preparing to take their departure.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ The following day Mr. Thaxter left for Philadelphia (see the *Courrier de l'Europe*, Jan. 2, 1784). It may have been from him or from Marbois that the *Pennsylvania Packet* received the following account of the voyage, which appeared in the issue of December 6th:

"We hear that the Packet from l'Orient lately arrived at New York, met with extreme bad weather on the passage, and after being eight days at sea, was obliged to put back to the port from whence she came, by which means the Definitive Treaty, which had just arrived, was put on board her. When she arrived on the American coast, she was several times driven off by contrary winds. The last time, not having for many days had an observation, they were at a loss how to proceed. When they came in sight of several ships, among which was an English man of war, who sent his boat on board with a lieutenant and his compliments, requesting that they would take on board and carry back a Pilot they had on board, and by reason of bad weather, had been obliged to carry off with them. The Captain of the Packet gladly complied, and a few days after got into the Hook."

CHAPTER VII

FIRST DAYS AS CONSUL

It is easy to imagine how anxiously Crèvecoeur must have looked about him, upon arrival, for the face of some one who could relieve his suspense in regard to his wife and children. He had had a presentiment, he tells us, that misfortune had overtaken his family; this unhappy premonition proved to be only too true, for he learned from a friend who came to meet the packet that his farm-house in Orange Country was burned, that his wife was dead, and that his children were gone, no one knew whither. "I should have fallen to the ground," he wrote, "but for the support, at this instant, of my friend Mr. Seyton, who had come to conduct me from the French vessel to his house."¹ This friend who, it will be remembered, had stood by Crèvecoeur during the dark days following his departure from Pine Hill and during his confinement in the Provost Prison, was the William Seton to whom the *Letters from an American Farmer* were addressed.² As their acquaintance was of old standing, and as Crèvecoeur's fortunes were so closely bound with those of Seton at one time or another, it seems appropriate to give some account of the friend under whose roof he now took shelter.

William Seton³ was born in Scotland, April 24, 1746.

¹ *Fannie St. John*, Emily Delesdernier, p. 23.

² For discussion of this point, see page 90.

³ The name is sometimes spelled "Seaton," and occasionally appears as "Seyton."

His early years were passed at Kirkbridge, in Yorkshire.⁴ It is possible that he went, later, to an English university. In the edition of the *Lettres*⁵ published in 1784, Crèvecoeur addresses his friend as "mon cher académicien," which certainly suggests that he was a man of some learning. In the first edition (1782),⁶ where he is referred to as "Mr. F. B.," the Farmer speaks of his friend having lived "abundance of time in that great house called Cambridge," and of his having expended "the Lord knows how many years in studying stars, geometry, stones and flies and in reading folio books," of his having also travelled to the city of Rome itself. The first page of the *Farmer's Letters* makes it plain that the author owed to Seton many details about European places and affairs. In the same letter the reader learns that Seton came to America, and travelled widely through the colonies.⁷ His brother-in-law, Andrew Seton,⁸ had settled at New York, so it was not strange that William Seton should have been persuaded to join him. This was in 1763, according to Robert Seton.⁹ A letter from Seton to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in the Library at Mantes,¹⁰ speaks of his having spent eighteen years at New York, which seems to point to 1766 as the time of his coming to this country. In 1767 he married Rebecca Curzon, of New York, and in 1768 their son, William Magee, was born. At this time Seton was an importer of European and Indian merchandise. His store was on Cruger's wharf (Front Street, between Coenties

⁴ *An Old Family, or the Setons of Scotland and of America*, Robert Seton, New York, 1899, pp. 255, ff.

⁵ I: 48.

⁶ Page 3.

⁷ Page 4.

⁸ To follow the spelling which seems to have been generally used by this member of the family (see Sabine's *Loyalists*, II: 575).

⁹ *An Old Family*, p. 255.

¹⁰ January 13, 1784.

and Old Slip).¹¹ In the same year he became a member of the New York Chamber of Commerce, founded at that time. From 1770 to 1773, according to Mme. de Barberey,¹² William Seton was in England. During these years, according to the same writer, Crèvecoeur addressed to him the letters published later.¹³ Robert de Crèvecoeur comments as follows, on this statement: "We doubt this greatly and are even disposed to think that the supposed correspondent of Crèvecoeur never existed" (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 296). Opposed to his biographer's incredulity may be placed Crèvecoeur's own remark in a letter to Jefferson, May 18, 1785,¹⁴ that he had been led from sketching what he saw and felt for a friend, to be an author. There seems little doubt that Crèvecoeur wrote down his impressions of colonial life and conditions at Seton's instigation, but whether these letters were part of an actual correspondence, or whether the information was put into letter-form merely as a literary device, is a point difficult to determine. Fortunately it is at the same time immaterial. The important and incontestable fact is that had it not been for William Seton, the book for which Crèvecoeur is most gratefully remembered would probably never have been written.

Mr. Seton does not seem to have taken an active part

¹¹ *Memorial History of New York*, II: 468, quoting from "Residences and stores of the merchants of New York, 1768," from Holt's *New York Journal*, and Gaine's *New York Mercury*.

¹² *Élisabeth Seton, ou les Commencements de l'Église catholique aux États-Unis*, 3rd edit., I: 61.

¹³ The title of the first edition reads, "Letters from an American Farmer . . . Written for the information of a friend in England. . . ." The edition of 1784 reads, "Lettres d'un cultivateur américain, écrites à W. S., écuyer, depuis l'année 1770 jusqu'à 1781. . . ." The edition of 1787 represents the letters as written to "W. S. . on, Esq., depuis l'année 1770 jusqu'en 1786. . . ."

¹⁴ Library of Congress, vol. 2, series 74, no. 5.

in the events which immediately preceded the Revolution, although he was appointed a member of the Committee of One Hundred to control the affairs of the city and county of New York. When the British troops took possession in the fall of 1776, he remained in the city¹⁵ and in this same year he was married again¹⁶ — this time to Anna Maria Curzon. His business was probably not prosperous during the war, for in 1777 he was appointed assistant warehouse keeper, an office which he retained until 1780. The story has already been told of how Seton indorsed Crèvecoeur's appeal to the Royalist leaders for aid in March, 1779, and of how he was effective in gaining the release of his friend from prison during the following year. The association of his name in Crèvecoeur's behalf in 1779, with that of Andrew Elliot, superintendent of police, makes it seem probable that he was filling the post of secretary to that officer at this time. It is certain that he held this position in 1782¹⁷ and that he was at the same time a notary public. In November, 1783, when the Loyalists were preparing to leave New York, Seton decided to remain in the city.¹⁸ His political opinions seem to have been so moderate at all times, and his personal character so high¹⁹ that he was equally acceptable as member of the committee of patriots in 1775, as civil officer under the English administration, and again as official in the Bank of New

¹⁵ Domett, *History of the Bank of New York*, 1884, pp. 17-27.

¹⁶ *An Old Family*, pp. 267-268.

¹⁷ Domett, *History of the Bank of New York*, pp. 17-27.

¹⁸ See Sabine's *Loyalists*, II: 273.

¹⁹ When André made his will at Staten Island, June 7, 1777, there were no witnesses and therefore it could not be proved. It is interesting to learn from Sabine's *Loyalists* that Mr. Seton appeared before the surrogate of New York, October 9, 1780, declaring that he was well-acquainted with André's writing, and that he had examined the document in question and believed it to be genuine.

York, founded the year after the peace. Crèvecoeur wrote in 1787 in regard to this appointment, "What I then (November, 1783) aforesaw, has since happened. His political opinions are forgotten, he enjoys public esteem, which he justly merits; and today he is at the head of the National Bank,—an important position, to which he was chosen by the unanimous suffrage of the shareholders."²⁰ Although he was one of the founders of the Bank of New York, he was not, as this suggests, its president. Alexander McDougall was president and Seton was first cashier. Robert Seton says that he would undoubtedly, but for political reasons, have been made president.²¹

The first few days after his arrival were spent by Crèvecoeur at Seton's home, in resting from the fatigue of the voyage and from the shock of the distressing news he had received in regard to his family. He was not able even to leave his friend's house for a time, as a letter he wrote the twenty-seventh of November shows. Early in the day he had received an invitation from "The Citizens of New York returned from Exile" to dine with them at Cape's Tavern, at three o'clock the following afternoon. His reply Thursday evening, after acknowledging the compliment of the invitation, went on to say, "As an antient Citizen of this State, as His Most Christian Majesty's Consul and as one of the firmest well-wishers to the United States of America," he would be "peculiarly happy to wait upon the Citizens of New York, to partake of that Public Joy which the present glorious moment must excite in every Patriotic Breast; but it is with regret that he must say, his state of Health does not admit of his accepting the honor offered to him, as he cannot with Safety quit his Chamber —." The following day he wrote again, "M^r.

²⁰ *Lettres*, III.

²¹ *An Old Family*, pp. 262-263.

S. John's respectful compliments to M. Broome — the First Lieutenant of the Packet has just come on shore and informed him that from an Accident that happened to the Pacquet in the Gale of Wind last Night, which obliged them to throw all their Wood, Water Casks, Lumber, &. upon the Deck, and this great fall of Snow ensuing, everything is in such a State on board that they cannot attempt to Fire their Guns —

M. S. John is extremely disappointed and chagrined that he is prevented from accomplishing his ardent wish, which was to pay the utmost Compliment to the Citizens of New York returned from Exile — he begs Mr. Broome will have the Goodness to communicate this, and to assure them of his great respect — ”²²

There was, indeed, sufficient reason for depression on Crèvecoeur's part, for in addition to his own private misfortunes, he could not help being affected by the wretched appearance of the brave little town which had just gone through its long occupation by a hostile army. Some idea of New York as it appeared before the war, and of the city to which he returned, can be gained from Crèvecoeur's own words:²³

“The city of New York is beautiful,” he wrote, “although somewhat irregular. This irregularity . . . is partly the result of the continual necessity for making new land in order to widen the city and secure for its commerce the shops and wharves that are needed.²⁴ Beaver Street, today so far from the harbor, was so-called formerly because there was a small bay there where these creatures had made a

²² A copy of this letter is in the Library at Mantes.

²³ The following is a running translation of the description Crèvecoeur wrote, probably during 1782 while he was in France. In translating his book into French, the author made a number of changes and introduced many additions. This account appears for the first time in the edition of 1784, page 75 ff., (Vol. 2).

²⁴ An account follows of how the wharves are constructed.

dam. I have talked to old people who said that they had seen the sea come as far as the neighborhood of the City Hall: which you know is now more than 300 fathoms distant. I knew an old woman who told me that she had been beaten for stealing apples from an orchard which stood where this same City Hall now stands.²⁵

Several of the streets have side-walks²⁶ on both sides, paved with flat stones and adorned with plane-trees whose shade in summer is equally grateful to the passers-by and to the houses. These unite Dutch neatness with English taste and architecture. . . Stone being rare, nearly all the city is built of brick. . . .²⁷

Never have I known a place where provisions of all kind were cheaper or more abundant; meat, bacon, ham, mutton, butter, cheese, grain, fish and oysters all combine to make living wholesome and cheap. Moreover everyone is well off and every one, including the poorest workman, fares well. I might mention eighty-one varieties of shell-fish! Each season furnishes its kind which are only to be had for a short time. Every fishing-boat is followed by a tiny boat made of cedar pierced with holes. In these moveable reservoirs all fish comes to market at New York. The quantity of oysters brought from every direction is surprising; all the large bays of Long Island as well as the harbour itself are full of them. They are generally sold for thirty-six cents a hundred.²⁸

The streets are often cleaned and are lighted on dark nights. There are 3,400 houses, 28,000 inhabitants,²⁹ and twenty churches.³⁰ The college, a fine building, is provided with a good library and with a

²⁵ This of course was the old city hall, not the one in Wall Street.

²⁶ Compare with this the statement in Stone's *History of New York City*, 1872, pp. 336-337: "New York received in 1790 her first side-walks, which were laid on both sides of Broadway, from Vesey to Murray Streets . . . these sidewalks were only narrow pavements of brick, scarcely allowing two lean men to walk abreast, or one fat man alone; still they were far preferable to walking in the middle of the streets on cobblestones . . ."

²⁷ A tribute to the hospitality and kindness of New Yorkers follows.

²⁸ In view of the present campaign for the reduction of the high cost of living, this passage is translated in full.

²⁹ John Quincy Adams estimated the city's population in 1785 at 18,000; Crèvecoeur's figures are undoubtedly too large.

³⁰ These are enumerated in a foot-note to page 78 of the *Lettres*.

large number of valuable mathematical instruments. It is a matter of regret, however, that it was not built farther from the capital, in some country retreat, where its students would be at a distance from the turmoil of buying and selling and from the dissipation and pleasures common to large cities. The chamber of commerce, incorporated by an act of the Assembly, appoints three of its members monthly to decide without expense or delay all the mercantile disputes which are brought to their notice.

The Marine Society . . . provides pensions and relief for the widows and children of those sailors who have made yearly deposits in the treasury of the society. . . ³¹

It is expected that New York will soon be abundantly supplied with water for use in the houses and for the cleansing of its streets. A fire-engine is now being constructed whose piston is eleven inches in diameter, that will make ten movements a minute. The engine will throw eight buckets of water at each movement of this rod. All the inhabitants of the city are divided into companies; every member is obliged to hang in the vestibule of his house, a leather bucket and a certain number of pouches. They have to hurry to the fires as quickly as possible, to help the firemen, to keep order, to carry water and to save the property of the victims . . . ³²

Nothing is more beautiful, and nothing at the same time gives to the thoughtful spectator a better idea of the wealth of this city," he concludes, ". . . than the multitude of vessels of all sizes which continually ply in the waters of the bay, leaving the harbour or coming to the city. It is owing to them that so much business is transacted without noise and without vehicles." ³³

The fortunes of war naturally effected a transformation in the appearance of the little town. "I found New York, once so flourishing and so neat, in such a condition that I can hardly give you a picture of it," Crèvecoeur wrote. "Eleven hundred of its houses had been burned," he said,

³¹ The Sailors' Hospital or Home is next described.

³² The insurance company is referred to and then follows a description of the waters which surround the city.

³³ Even in 1789 there were not half a dozen carriages, for example, in the town (see "The Fourteen Miles Round," p. 191, by A. B. and M. M. Mason in the *Half Moon Series*).

"its streets were almost wholly unpaved, the fine trees that formerly shaded the widest streets had been cut and carried away off. The wharves and shops were strangely out of repair, and a great many houses had neither doors, clapboards nor windows. Almost all the churches (of which the enemy had made hospitals, riding-schools or barracks) were half ruined. Our promenades, sacrificed to military uses, no longer existed; our fine college, turned into a hospital, had lost its library as well as its scientific instruments, and the fire-engine was in ruins." To let him continue:³⁴

"The day after our landing, we had a second gale of wind still more violent than that which drove us along so happily, and it lasted longer. Hardly were we free from the alarm caused by this storm when a fire broke out at night in the middle of the town. The rancor of feeling, the sullen and smothered passion and despair of many loyalists, as they drew near the time when they must leave their country forever, — along with the severe laws passed against them by the Americans, — made many persons fear that this fire might be the first flash of a general conflagration. You must have experienced for some hours the corrosive uneasiness of a situation so alarming in order to form any conception of it. The Continental troops encamped on Harlem Heights, in full view of the flames, had the same suspicion; a great many of the soldiers, convinced that the city was to be burned, left their camp to aid in putting out the fire; but fortunately they were stopped on the way. The authority of General Washington prevented an outbreak which would have completed the general disaster, and finished the destruction of this unlucky city. The American soldiers would have doubtless tried to force a passage — the English would have resisted, both sides would have been aided by their partisans, and these men in whom the bitterness engendered by civil war had not been softened, would have killed each other by the light of a general conflagration. In a crisis so extraordinary some citizens feared that the unfortunate loyalists had planned to destroy the town they must soon abandon. But this was an unjust suspicion; it soon came out that the fire accidentally started in Rutgers' brewery. The vigilance

³⁴ Translated from *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, 1787, III.

of Sir Guy Carleton, the English general, soon quieted all the alarms, and restored tranquillity to the agitated minds. By eleven o'clock the flames were extinguished."³⁵

The day after the evacuation of New York by the British, and a week after his own arrival, Crèvecoeur wrote to Thomas Mifflin, president of Congress, announcing the establishment of the packet-service. Clinton's acknowledgment the day following closed by saying, "I must on this occasion express my satisfaction that the care of the Packets is committed to you; because from a long acquaintance I am perfectly convinced that the Business will be managed & conducted in such manner as to merit every return of Confidence and Applause." The management of the service, however, was deputed at first by Crèvecoeur to his friend Seton. Six days after the arrival of the *Courrier de l'Europe*, Seton sent a long notice to the *New York Gazette*³⁶ in regard to the packets. It was signed "William Seton, deputy agent, 215 Water Street." For some months³⁷ the "deputy agent" continued to direct the affairs of the packets,³⁸ and during this time Crèvecoeur probably stayed at his house. That he was living with Seton so late as the fifteenth of January, at least, is evident from a statement in a letter of that date.³⁹ Seton's knowledge of French and his familiarity

³⁵ A letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Dec. 17, 1783, also speaks of this alarming conflagration and the consequent disturbance which ensued.

³⁶ November 27, 1783. A copy of the letter is in the Library at Mantes.

³⁷ See the issue of Dec. 10, 1783.

³⁸ When Crèvecoeur went to Boston in the latter part of March following, he left the packet management to a M. Grandchamp (see letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke, Dec. 12, 1784, in the Library at Mantes).

³⁹ "M. W. Seton the worthy friend . . . under whose roof I now Live . . ." (see letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in the Library at Mantes).

with American affairs enabled him to be of great service to Crèvecoeur in regard to details connected with the packet service, and also in consular matters. As the story of the packet service is little known, and as the consular relations between France and the United States during the latter days of the Revolution and during the reconstruction period that followed have been very slightly treated by historians, it has seemed advisable to devote special chapters to the discussion of these two subjects.⁴⁰

"Number 215 Water Street" may have been William Seton's place of business, or it may have been the consular headquarters. It was probably the latter, for Robert Seton says that the firm of Seton, Maitland and Company was founded about 1784,⁴¹ at 61 Stone Street.⁴² In 1784, Robert Seton adds, his ancestor acquired a small country-place on the west side of Manhattan, about where Seventy-eighth Street is now.⁴³ This was probably a successor to the "elegant house two miles out on the Bowery Road, formerly in the possession of Mr. Seton," advertised for rent in 1786.⁴⁴ It is possible that this house on the Bowery Road may have been the home to which the new consul was so hospitably received. It seems more likely, however, that two men of affairs would have found it necessary to live nearer the centre of the town. Whether this means that

⁴⁰ See Chapter XI, "The Packet Service," and Chapter XII, "The Consular Service."

⁴¹ *An Old Family*, p. 263.

⁴² In 1786 William Seton and Co.'s store was in Sloat Lane, fronting Hanover Square (see Noah Webster's *N. Y. City Directory*, 1786). In September of that year their counting-house was moved to 201 Queen St. (now Pearl). By 1787 their headquarters had been changed again to Number 12 Hanover Square.

⁴³ In old letters it is sometimes called "Craigdon" and sometimes "Craggdon" (*An Old Family*, p. 264).

⁴⁴ *New York City Directory*, 1786.

Crèvecoeur and Seton were established at Stone Street or not is uncertain, but probable.

Under Seton's roof Crèvecoeur now entered upon a correspondence which goes back for its beginnings to the days preceding his sailing for America in the early autumn. No reader of the *Farmer's Letters* can fail to be impressed by the author's interest in natural phenomena and in his observation of plant and animal life.⁴⁵ Not that he spoke from wide knowledge on these subjects, but that such details attracted his attention and led him to share them with his readers. In 1782, it will be remembered, he was persuaded by Turgot to publish a small pamphlet on the subject of potato-culture, which showed that he was something more than a merely curious observer. In the spring of that year Crèvecoeur was living in Paris, at number 30 Quai de Bethune in l'île Saint-Louis. Turgot was a member of the Académie des sciences and one of the founders of the Société d'agriculture. Crèvecoeur's interest in scientific matters must have been greatly fostered by his association with Turgot and with his friend Buffon, at whose house they dined twice a week.⁴⁶ At Paris, too, Crèvecoeur met Franklin, and thereafter references to the "Patriarch d'électricité" are to be found in his letters. The reader will recall that as a result of this acquaintance Crèvecoeur induced many of his friends to set up lightning-rods in their courtyards or upon their houses. This rather unusual power of observation, added to his quick perception of what was valuable and to be remembered in casual conversation and in ordinary affairs, led the Duke de la Rochefoucauld to suggest that Crèvecoeur, upon his return to America,

⁴⁵ Notice, e.g., the description of the coming of winter in the Mohawk valley (*Lettres*, 1787, II: 289), or the outbreak of the electric storm, or the many details in Letter II of the first edition.

⁴⁶ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 68.

carefully observe and gather together such facts of scientific interest as came to his notice. Just what use was to be made of them is not specifically stated in the letters that have been preserved. It was enough that his friend desired it. "I have carefully followed the instructions which you gave me in regard to natural history," Crèvecoeur wrote in reply about six weeks before sailing, "be certain that I shall spare no efforts to procure friends and correspondents which I hope will prove of use in this new career; my zeal and my desire to be useful must supply my want of ability." In the same letter the writer continued, "I wrote to M. the Marquis de Condorcet to ask for the letter which he promised me from the Académie des sciences to the one at Philadelphia. I took the liberty of explaining to him the reasons which led me to wish to be the bearer of it, but I have had no reply."⁴⁷ The twenty-third of August he wrote again to Rochefoucauld, "Can I have done or said anything to offend M. the Marquis de Condorcet? I wrote to him upon my return from Paris — he had promised me a letter for the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia — and I have unfortunately heard nothing from him."

A week later the delay was explained. "If I only possessed the knowledge that it calls for," he exclaimed to his friend, "I should have some right to the honour which the Académie des sciences, at your instigation, has just accorded me."⁴⁸ This was the title of "correspondent" which that society awarded him August 20, 1783, and of which he had just heard. "I don't know how to describe the effect which the surprise and pleasure of the receipt of the letter from the Marquis de Condorcet had upon me. I had not dreamed that his silence sprang from such kind and flattering intentions in

⁴⁷ Translated from a letter of Aug. 7, 1783, in the Library at Mantes. American Philosophical Society.

⁴⁸ Translated from a letter in the Library at Mantes.

my behalf." Two days later he was again seized with misgiving, however, in regard to his ability to execute his commission from the Académie des sciences. "I am afraid that my ignorance and inaptitude will prevent me from fulfilling your expectations as intelligently and as fully as the commission which you have obtained for me from the Académie deserves. . . . I have not the faintest knowledge of chemistry nor of natural history."⁴⁹ Yet, in spite of the doubt that beset him in regard to his ability for this new task, Crèvecoeur found it absorbing and congenial. In fact he expresses a wish that his consular duties were less exigent and confining, so that he might devote himself with even greater energy to the collection and dissemination of scientific information.

Far from conflicting with the purpose which had animated the French king in appointing Crèvecoeur to the post of consul, these efforts in behalf of the spread of scientific knowledge in both countries were part of the understanding between the consul and the ministry. A letter written by Crèvecoeur a few days after arrival (November 26th) to the governor of New Jersey shows how fully he was authorized by the government he represented to further the cause of science in the two countries.

"To His Excellency Governor Livingston, of the state of New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY 26 November 1783

Sir

. . . The Minister who is at the head of the Nurseries and Botanical Gardens in France, has ordered me in His Majesty's name to acquaint Your Excellency, that if the Executive Power of the State of New Jersey form an establishment of a Botanical Garden for the cultivation of the useful and curious Productions in America, His Majesty anxiously desirous in every way to give Proofs of his Great attachment to the

⁴⁹ Translated from the letter of Sept. 1, 1783, to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, in the Library at Mantes.

United States of America, has given directions to the said Minister to send at His Majesty's expence from his Royal Gardens every species of seeds and Plants that the Director of the Botanical Gardens in New Jersey may wish to have.

Upon a presumption that New Jersey from it's situation, Climate and Number of Citizens who have always been anxious to promote the good of their Country, would look upon this as a matter well worthy of attention I have already brought with me upwards of two Hundred different Kinds of Seeds of the most rare, useful and curious Plants, all marked agreeable to the Linneian System; amongst them are the seeds of the real Tartarian Rhubarb, and by the following Packets, I have reason to expect I shall receive many more.

As an Ancient Citizen of America, and His Most Christian Majesty's Consul for New Jersey, it will give me double pleasure if this Proposition is adopted by the Legislature of New Jersey, and that it may become the foundation of the first Botanical Garden in America. . . .

(Signed) St. JOHN.⁵⁰

The General Assembly of the State of New Jersey in reply to this letter ordered that the governor be requested to acquaint Mr. Crèvecoeur with their grateful sense of His Majesty's proposal⁵¹ and to assure him that whenever the state should form a botanical garden the French king's offer would be gratefully accepted.⁵² There the matter dropped for the time being, but as a botanical garden was actually established in New Jersey a few years later, due indirectly to Crèvecoeur's efforts, this may be as good a place as any to give an account of it.

In November, 1784 (about a year after the foregoing letter to Governor Livingston, that is), Crèvecoeur wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, "I am sending you the outline of a scientific journey which I forwarded to the Baron

⁵⁰ In the Library at Mantes.

⁵¹ Dec. 10, 1783 (*Votes and Proceedings*, 1781-1786, p. 64; see page 388 and 389 of the original).

⁵² The letter from the governor was sent Dec. 15, 1783. A copy is in the Library at Mantes.

de Breteuil and to the Maréchal de Castries. What do you think of it? My idea is a good one but it needs to be carefully considered. How much both countries would gain by it!"⁵³ The project called for a botanist and a naturalist, accompanied each by an artist, to make a tour of the thirteen states, setting down in detail what they saw. The account was to include not only matter of scientific interest, information in regard to plant and animal life, etc., but plans of the principal cities and of all places of importance with pictures of places and persons made memorable by the recent war. The colleges of the country were to be asked to coöperate with the travellers, in order to secure the best results with the least loss of time. The history of the expedition was to be written by some man of letters who should accompany them. The historian might, if he had the capacity and the requisite curiosity, add the crowning touch to this monumental labor by giving some account of the manners and customs of the people among whom they journeyed, analyzing the causes of the differences among them, and adding any sort of information which he might deem interesting or valuable. A copy of the whole proceeding was to be deposited in the library of the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia.

The Crèvecoeur-Rochefoucauld correspondence does not indicate what was the result of this memoir, but among the Acts of the Eighth General Assembly of the State of New Jersey is one that is of interest in connection with Crèvecoeur's scheme, and that may have been an outcome of his proposition to the governor on behalf of the French king, and of the detailed scheme which he forwarded in 1784 to the ministry. It is dated March 3, 1786, and reads as follows:⁵⁴

⁵³ Translated from a letter of November 14, 1784, in the Library at Mantes.

⁵⁴ Vol. 1783-1788, pp. 242-243.

“An ACT to enable Andrè Michaux to purchase Lands in the State of New-Jersey under certain Restrictions.

Whereas Andrè Michaux, Botanist of His Most Christian Majesty, by his Petition to the Legislature of this State, has represented, that after having been employed for several Years in the Investigation of natural Curiosities in Persia, and other Parts of Asia, His Majesty has commissioned him, as his Botanist, to travel through the United States of America, and to establish a botanical Intercourse and Correspondence between France and these States; that he has full Powers to draw from France at the King's Expense, any Tree, Plant or Vegetable, that may be wanting in this Country; and that he has likewise Orders to send to France all the Curiosities which may serve to extend botanical Knowledge and increase the Enjoyments of the Gifts of Nature; That for the Attainment of the above Purposes he wishes to establish near Bergen, in the State of New-Jersey, a botanical Garden of about thirty Acres, in order to make useful Experiments, with Respect to Agriculture and Gardening; and intends to make a Depository not only of French and American Plants, but of all other Productions of the World which may be drawn from the King's Garden at Paris: But that, according to the Laws of this State, an Alien cannot be possessed of any Tract of Land without having previously acknowledged himself a Citizen of America; and that, in Consideration of the Reasons above-mentioned, he hopes that the Legislature will make an Exception in his Favour, and grant him the Faculty of purchasing a small Tract of thirty Acres of Land in the Neighborhood of Bergen: and whereas the Legislature is willing to promote the above laudable Design of the said Andrè Michaux, by granting him the Faculty requested, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED by the Council and General Assembly of this State, and it is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Andrè Michaux to purchase and to hold in Fee-simple, to him and his Heirs and Assigns for-ever, any Tract or Tracts of Land, not exceeding Two Hundred acres in the Whole, in any Part or Parts of this State, with the Tenements and Appurtenances thereunto belonging, in as full, ample and perfect a Manner as if he, the said Andrè Michaux, was a Citizen of this State, to be appropriated to the sole Purposes of a botanical Garden, agreeably to the Prayer of the Petition, subject to like Duties as other Lands held by Citizens of this State are subjected to, any

Alienage or Want of Naturalization to the Contrary thereof in any-wise notwithstanding.

Passed at Trenton, March 3, 1786."

This act of the legislature was no doubt the foundation of the astonishing statement contained in the *Salem Mercury* for July 3, 1787, which announced that an act had been passed in New Jersey "for naturalizing His Most Christian Majesty in this State, as a preliminary to his making a purchase of thirty acres of territory on Bergen Neck,⁵⁵ nearly opposite the city of New York, for the purpose of a garden and fruitery." The paragraph continues, "Part of this space is at present enclosing with a stone wall; and a universal collection of exotick as well as domestic plants, trees, and flowers, are already begun to be introduced to this elegant spot, which in time must rival if not exceed the most celebrated gardens of Europe. . . ." ⁵⁶ André Michaux, the proprietor of the "Frenchman's Garden," ^{57 58} was connected with the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. Before undertaking the direction of the garden at Jersey City, he had established a nursery at Charleston, South Carolina,⁵⁹ for the cultivation of trees and shrubs to be naturalized in France. From the Charleston gardens he made one shipment, "but the Revolution prevented remittances and the work was discontinued. . . ." Among

⁵⁵ Now Jersey City.

⁵⁶ The discrepancy between the facts as they were and the facts as they were reported was pointed out by Charles H. Winfield in his *History of the Land Titles in Hudson County, N. J., 1609-1871*; N. Y., 1872, p. 302. He quotes the *New Jersey Journal* for June 27, 1787, from which the paragraph in the *Mercury* was, no doubt, copied.

⁵⁷ Now included in the present Macpelah cemetery.

⁵⁸ W. Jay Mills, in his *Historic Houses of New Jersey*, p. 14, says that a delightful fiction was current that Michaux was the unfortunate dauphin of Louis XVI.

⁵⁹ *Washington after the Revolution*, W. S. Baker, 1898, p. 59.

the "exotick plants" which he imported was the Lombardy poplar.⁶⁰ The *Gentleman's Magazine* contains a reference to the introduction of this tree into America. "This valuable tree has lately been introduced into America by Monsieur Saulnier,⁶¹ superintendent of the French king's garden at Bergen County, New Jersey, about four miles from Hoebuck's ferry." The garden at Bergen Neck became a fashionable place of resort for New Yorkers, and the project attracted a good deal of attention. How long it continued to exist, I do not know. After many years of travel in America Michaux returned to France about 1796.⁶²

At the same time that proposals for the establishment

⁶⁰ Further trace of his residence in Charleston may be seen on the title-page of his *Histoire des chênes de l'Amérique*, . . . par André Michaux, membre associé de l'Institut National de France, et de la Societe d'Agriculture de Charlestown, Caroline Meridionale &c., Paris, 1801.

⁶¹ Paul Saulnier, or Saunier, was the gardener who accompanied Michaux. Readers who are interested in Michaux will enjoy Manasseh Cutler's account of his visit to this horticulturalist and naturalist in 1787 (see *Life, Journals and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler*. . . 1888; pp. 291-292).

⁶² Michaux's son, François André, was sent by the French government in 1802 on a botanical expedition similar to that which his father had undertaken. The result of these travels was given to the public in his four volumes entitled *Histoire des arbres forestres de l'Amérique*, 1801-13. The André Michaux who was employed by Col. Richard Varick in 1808 to plan the garden for the Hunt House which he had just bought was probably the son of the man whom Manasseh Cutler visited in 1787. The house referred to stood at the end of Essex Street, facing the bay. It had been built in 1807 by Major Hunt, the ferry keeper, who sold it in 1808 to Col. Varick, who enlarged it and engaged André Michaux to plan the garden which ran to the waterfront. "Memories of the rare flowers in grotesquely shaped beds, and especially of one long avenue of imported plum-trees, still linger in the minds of a few old Jersey citizens" (*Historic Houses of New Jersey*, p.15).

of a botanical garden in New Jersey were made by Crèvecoeur to the governor of that state, a similar offer was made by him to John Dickenson, president of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.⁶³ Dickenson replied, "We have received the Letter you honored us with and very gratefully acknowledge the polite and obliging manner in which the communications it contains have been made to us. Being perfectly sensible of the great goodness of His most Christian Majesty, and of the happy consequences that may be derived from his generous intentions, we have laid the information you have been pleased to give, before the General Assembly who are now sitting." The fact that the city of Philadelphia already possessed a private botanical garden⁶⁴ may have decided the legislature against accepting the French king's offer. At any rate nothing further appears in Crèvecoeur's correspondence in regard to the matter.

Early in December Crèvecoeur sent a notice to the *New York Gazette* in regard to a French medical publication, the *Journal de médecine, chirurgie et pharmacie militaire*, which he was authorized to offer to such societies or individuals as were likely to make good use of it.⁶⁵ Crèvecoeur's notice read:

"To any association of Physicians in the different parts of the United States: Or to any individuals of the medical profession I have it in command from one of his most Christian Majesty's ministers to inform such societies that all the physicians of that kingdom

⁶³ January 27, 1783. A copy is in the Library at Mantes.

⁶⁴ I refer, of course, to the garden belonging to John Bartram, or Bertram, who was a friend of Crèvecoeur's. An account of Bartram and his garden appeared in the *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter XI. This is probably a description of Crèvecoeur's own visit to the botanist, although it is ascribed to "Mr. Iw——n Al——z a Russian gentleman."

⁶⁵ December 10, 1783.

are incorporated; and at the royal press, at Paris, there is monthly published at the king's expence a Book entitled *Journal de Médecine, chirurgie et pharmacie Militaire*, containing a most interesting collection of various matters, such as Topographic Medico descriptions of the different parts of the kingdom; causes of epidemic diseases; relations of the most extraordinary cases and their cures; medical waters &c. &c.⁶⁶

This useful publication I am directed to offer to such medical societies or associations of physicians as well as to such individuals of the medical profession as may wish to peruse it; and to assure them that if they will address a few lines to me, signed with their names, I will immediately transmit the same to the Minister, who will forward by the French packets lately established between port l'Orient and New York, as many copies of these periodical publications as they may require, free of any expence. As an ancient inhabitant of this country I feel a peculiar pleasure in communicating this intelligence, sensible it may be of universal utility.

ST. JOHN

Consul for the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut."⁶⁷

In consequence of this advertisement, which was widely copied, Crèvecoeur received a great many letters. Henry Tillinghast of Providence⁶⁸ begged for numbers of the *Journal* from 1780 to the current issue. Joseph Hamilton of Sharon, Connecticut, explained that he belonged to a society of about forty members which went by the name of "The first Medical Society in the Thirteen United States since their Independ-

⁶⁶ All the physicians and surgeons of the military hospitals in France were directed to furnish the Royal Society of Physicians at Paris with descriptions of all the diseases in their hospitals, and of the method of treating them, also to report all the operations that were performed, and to further retail any discoveries in pharmacy that were made. From these reports the society selected whatever material they judged suitable and published a volume every year, printed in quarterly instalments. (See *New Haven Gazette*, July 15, 1784.)

⁶⁷ The letter is dated New York, December 3, 1783. (See the *Boston Magazine*, December, 1783, p. 78.)

⁶⁸ December 16, 1783.

ence." He had no doubt that this society would be greatly pleased to accept His Majesty's offer, but inasmuch as there had been no meeting since the advertisement appeared ⁶⁹ he wrote to ask for the magazines on his own behalf. From Trenton William Bryant and John Gibson, "Practitioners in Physic & Surgery," wrote to avail themselves of the consul's offer.⁷⁰ Robert Rogers, a Boston physician, also asked for numbers of the *Journal*,⁷¹ and expressed his gratitude to the king in the following burst of eloquence: "May His Majesty's Reign be very long, prosperous and happy, and may he at some very distant period exchange his temporal Crown here for one of unfading glory in the Realms of Paradise." The same day a joint letter was received from John Warren⁷² and John Feron,⁷³ asking to be "indulged" with a sufficient number of the periodicals for the University of Cambridge in which three medical professors were established ("one of anatomy and surgery, one of the theory and practice of Physic, and one of Chemistry and materia medica"). "We are happy," they went on to say, "to receive this favor from the hands of a Man for whom we have so high an esteem and who has in so polite and obliging Terms expressed the highest Satisfaction in communicating this Intelligence." ⁷⁴ By midsummer so many more requests were received for the *Journal de médecine* than Crèvecoeur could possibly satisfy that he announced through the *Independent Journal* (N. Y.) ⁷⁵ that he had decided to put the French originals into the hands of Dr.

⁶⁹ The letter is dated December 22, 1783.

⁷⁰ December 31, 1783.

⁷¹ January 1, 1784.

⁷² Professor of anatomy and surgery in the university at Cambridge and fellow of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and censor of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

⁷³ Another member of the Massachusetts Medical Society.

⁷⁴ Copies of all these letters are in the Library at Mantes.

⁷⁵ June 23, 1784.

Joseph Brown, a New York surgeon, by whom they would be translated into English and published (according to the translator's own announcement) by subscription.⁷⁶

The exceptional severity of the winter of 1783-1784, which seems to have almost equalled that of 1779-1780, combined with his ill-health, kept Crèvecoeur somewhat confined during the first months of his consulship. Writing at the close of the year,⁷⁷ he says, "The disastrous event which has befallen me [referring to the fate of his wife and children] as well as the overturned condition of affairs has not allowed me to do all that I should like to do . . . the [irregularity of the] mails, the severity of the season, the fearful storms we have undergone ⁷⁸ — everything conspires morally as well as physically to keep me by my fireside."⁷⁹ Yet his correspondence shows that he took his commission from the Academy of Science as seriously as circumstances permitted. Before the end of December he had sent to France a quantity of young trees of a sort that had been found useful in this country, and he regretted that he had not arrived a month earlier so that he might have sent seeds and cuttings as well. He found time also to write an account of some of the uses to which the acacia was put here, a report which was the basis, no doubt, if not the actual substance, of the communication which he laid before the Royal Agricultural Society at Paris upon his return to France a few years later.⁸⁰ With it he sent specimens of a kind of grass which the Americans used as fodder. This is the "widow's mite,"

⁷⁶ See the *New Haven Gazette*, August 5, 1784.

⁷⁷ December 30th.

⁷⁸ He wrote in a letter of December 17th that a severe earthquake had also taken place, and that there had been more than thirty shipwrecks.

⁷⁹ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld; in the Library at Mantes; translated.

⁸⁰ See Chapter X, p. 168.

he explains apologetically, "which I beg the Academy to accept."⁸¹ He sent also samples of hickory and sassafras, with comments on their special uses; tables and boxes made of sassafras emit a most agreeable smell when they are rubbed, he says, while axle-trees are commonly made of hickory, which is extremely strong.⁸²

Not content with merely recording his observations and sending his reports to France, he had tried, as has been seen, to spread abroad such medical and botanical information as was at his disposal as agent of the French government and representative of the Academy of Science. While his scheme for botanical gardens in Pennsylvania and New Jersey did not meet with immediate acceptance; in Connecticut the plan met with favor, and a garden was started at New Haven in connection with the new medical society founded at that place in 1784. These two ventures may be traced in the correspondence which took place between Crèvecoeur and Pierrepont Edwards in the first two months of 1784.⁸³ Writing from New York the twenty-seventh of January, Crèvecoeur speaks of having heard that "several ingenious Persons" of New Haven were about to establish a medical society there. "As consul for the States of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut; I look upon it as a most pleasing part of my duty to exert what little influence I may have with the French Ministry, as well as with many worthy and Illustrious Persons in Paris in order to procure to that Infant Society [the medical society about to be] whatever Books and other Helps it may stand in need of." The attention of the society is then called to the notice in the New York papers in regard to the periodical that has been

⁸¹ Letter of December 29, 1783, to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld; in the Library at Mantes.

⁸² See a letter to the duke, at the same place, dated simply "1784," but written probably in February. ⁸³ Now in the Library at Mantes.

already described, and the society is further advised to adopt as foreign members, de Breuil, of the Paris faculty, and M. Parmentier, director of pharmacy and head of the Hôtel des Invalides. This letter followed a conversation between Crèvecoeur and Edwards on the subject of the new society, in which Crèvecoeur urged the establishment of a botanical garden in connection with the new organization. The following day he wrote again to Edwards: "Sir, the subject on which we conversed Yesterday has had so powerful an effect on my mind, that in the course of revolving it under all its appearances, a new thought has occurred to me which I feel an irresistible Impulse to communicate to you . . . this Botanical Garden . . . will want a certain degree of Celebrity both in Europe and in America . . . if none can be found here, you must look abroad for Protectors. . . ." Crèvecoeur then suggests that they nominate certain distinguished Frenchmen whom he will designate by name as soon as he obtains their permission to do so, as patrons to the new establishment.

This idea met with enthusiastic acceptance. Upon his return from New York Edwards communicated the consul's proposal to the Medical Society. "I have read your Letter," he wrote,⁸⁴ "to more than half the City; and am daily obliged to parry their importunities to read them again by urging my own private Business as an Excuse." When, he asks, can Crèvecoeur arrange to visit New Haven and give these gentlemen the privilege of seeing him? The letter concludes with an expression of such ardent admiration for his correspondent that it may be quoted in full.

"I am harassed by ignorant and impertinent Clients or could not be restrained from writing you a very long Letter I could never be wearied with your Conversation, but ever highly delighted, and it is very natural for us to wish to possess talents with which we are pleased

⁸⁴ February 11, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

in our Friends; could I be so happy as to spend several Months with you I should have a Ray of Hope that at some period of my Existence, if sufficiently long, I might cease to be irksome to you, but at present I know that I shall consult your happiness by saying no more than that I am your most Obedient and very humble Servant.”⁸⁵

Edwards' letter contained also a map of New Haven and a copy of the new charter. The following day Crèvecoeur wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, referring to the granting of this charter:

“. . . I have had the good Fortune to know the Patriots who Inform me of their schemes & to urge them on by all the Means I cou'd suggest; . . . what wou'd you say, Mylord Duke, if I was to tell you, that your name as well as several other very respectable ones have been made use of on this occasion, I have a thousand pardons to ask, but my Intention being to do good, I hope when I explain the matter you'll forgive me . . . Perhaps we shall have there the first Botanical Garden ever established here, this I must say is my work: . . . New Haven is likely too, to have a Medical Society by means of the Books & assistance of the good Abbé Nollin,”⁸⁶

A few days later the committee of correspondence of the new society made formal acknowledgment of Crèvecoeur's services in their behalf.

“We beg leave to assure you,” they wrote, “that we have attended with particular Pleasure to your Benevolent proposals & generous tenders of Assistance to establish a Botanical Garden in our new City; We have communicated your Proposals to the Reverend & worthy President D^r Esra Stiles of our Colledge and submitted it to his Consideration, whether it would not be of the greatest Utility to have it annexed to that Learned Seminary? . . . if this Measure should not meet with success, it will not deter us from making the attempt in some other way — as you are perfectly acquainted with our Climate you will be the most competent Judge what Plants will be the most likely to thrive and do well in our New Garden; if you will please to inform us where we shall call for the Seeds you have so kindly offered, and favor us with directions respecting the Soil most suitable for them,

⁸⁵ February 12, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

⁸⁶ February 20, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

the best Season of Planting them & we will send for them without delay, and as soon as may be convenient after the Season opens, begin this Pleasing Labour. . . .”

Crèvecoeur sent this letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, suggesting that it might be translated and published in the *Mercure* or elsewhere. “One of my principle Reasons wou’d be that, if as a French consul I am as yet very uninformed, unequal to the Business, Liable to error & censures, at Least as a Frenchman I do constantly study, whatever may tend to Render our Nation more & most Respectable in y^e eyes of the Americans — & to tell you the Truth, this study is much more congenial to my small Faculties than the complicated office of a consul.” To his friends at New Haven he wrote, acknowledging their complimentary letter and offering further advice in regard to the Medical Society and the Botanical Garden:

“ . . . the acquaintance of whatever is to be found in that of the king’s may be depended upon. . . . This continent contains also great Botanical Riches, which must be gradually Collected and Planted in your Garden — if this is a part of your design, it will, I am very sure, greatly Please the Learned in Europe, and if adopted, will procure you abundance of Friends, Protectors and Helpers — but this New Plan and Medical Institution, must be made known to them; — for that purpose your Intention of undertaking that hitherto unheeded Collection should be drawn up in a Concise manner, along with the Sketch of your Medical Society, and should be followed by a request that they would honor your new Botanical Institution, with their Patronage and Protection — that they would also permit that it’s Charter should also appear in the World, subscribed with their Names as Partners — associates and Protectors — such a step would I am sure, procure you many Encouragements, Books, Prints, and every other Succour, which you may want; and perhaps too, a Person well versed in Botany, who would be sent here at their Expense, to conduct your Garden, to make Collections, to Institute a Hortus Siccus & until among the Pupils of the New Academy some one might be found capable of becoming a Professor—for that purpose I would recommend you to draw up a Short address, preceded by a Sketch of your Plan and Signed

by the Gentlemen of the Committee which I would Copy and send Enclosed in my Letters to every one of those Good and Great Personages.⁸⁷ The Consciousness I have, that this Step would be conducive to the Aggrandisement and Perfection of your Institution, makes me earnestly wish you would embrace it — I warrant its Propriety as well as its' Success.

The Seeds I send, want only to be sown in Boxes under some Shelter; each should be sown separately & accompanied with a Cedar Sticke, on which should be nailed a piece of tin 2 by 3 Inches, painted white, with the Name of each Plant Painted black; as soon as these will be big enough, they should be placed in Beds with the same Sticks, which would at once give your Garden an Instructive and a Botanical appearance.

To render still your new Medical Institution, more extensively useful I would recommend to connect it in some Measure with the Translation and Publication of the French Journal de Médecine, a few Numbers of which I now send you to convince you of their Utility; I am sure no work would sell more rapidly, & would be a more Seasonable & Welcome Present to the Continent — this undertaking, Patronised by your Medical Society, would throw on it, a well deserved Renown; would employ a Bookseller & an Editor, give great Reputation to your New City, and in short would have a tendency to render New Haven a Place equally desirable to live in, on account of the Political Liberality of its Citizens, as well as on account of it's being the Seminary of a New Science — Some time hence, a Chair of Chemistry too, might perhaps be solicited and obtained, tho at present this is but a simple Conjecture.

As soon as you are pleased to send me your Letters for Mess^{rs}. Parmentier & Dubreuil, I will carefully forward them, enclosed in mine to each of these Gentlemen; I have, by the Packet, sent for more Seeds of useful and curious Plants —

. . . I beg the Society would accept the Book of M^r. Parmentier, which I send you'll find therein the Good Citizen and the able Chymist;

— . . .

S JOHN.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ The patrons proposed were the Duke de la Rochefoucauld and the Duke de Liancourt, the Marquis de Condorcet, the Prince de Beauvau, the Duke d'Harcourt, l'abbé Nollin, M. du Breuil, M. Parmentier and the Count de Jarnac.

⁸⁸ See letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld May 1, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

By May the garden was laid out, and later Crèvecoeur proposed that it be further enriched by the collection to be gathered by the scientist who should make the journey outlined in the memoir presented to the Baron de Breteuil, already referred to.⁸⁹ The interest in the project which was taken by the French patrons whose names Crèvecoeur suggested undoubtedly led to the action on the part of the city of New Haven the following May,⁹⁰ when it extended the rights of citizenship to them.⁹¹

The journalistic instinct which was always strong in Crèvecoeur found frequent expression at this period. "Our castaway Pacquet," he wrote, soon after the wreck of the *Courrier de St. Louis* off the shores of Long Island in February, 1784, "supplies me with Mercures and Journals, out of which I extract & Publish the most usefull & Edifying Passages. . . ." Bits of interest from American gazettes he translated and forwarded to France for insertion in the *Mercure* or for circulation among his friends. Two such accounts were sent by him to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in January, describing Washington's resignation, and his letters contain other references to this practice. In February he sent to the duke a newspaper containing an account which he himself had written of New Haven and its new charter. This was cast in the form of "a supposed letter from Hartford"; one more use of a device of which Crèvecoeur and his contemporaries were extraordinarily fond. It is interesting to read his comment elsewhere upon the scope of the

⁸⁹ In the Library at Mantes; not dated, but written before January 21, 1785.

⁹⁰ May 10, 1785; see Hippeau's *Gouvernement de Normandie*, III: 136.

⁹¹ See also Crèvecoeur's letter to Dr. Stiles, now owned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, in which he refers to the gift of these French patrons to the college library, including, besides several instruments, the complete royal edition of the new Encyclopedia.

newspapers of his day, and his estimate of their influence.⁹² In regard to the latter point he observes moderately enough, "I do not know whether I mistake in assuring you that these papers may be considered as one of the causes which diffuse throughout a grate [sic] degree of light & knowledge." This does not seem a very hazardous assertion when one considers the present estimate which is placed on the power of the press! But when one remembers that although Crèvecoeur described them in almost awestruck fashion as "diurnal and voluminous" they, nevertheless, hardly succeeded in a year's time in attaining the bulk of two Sunday issues of one of our modern dailies, his caution is commendable. Yet he is convinced of their value as "circulating staples" in which one may read not only matters of political importance, but also "historical facts, interesting details upon agriculture, physick, commerce, the mathematics, &c." "One sees there always," he adds, "a place consecrated to the muses, called the Poets' Corner."⁹³

There is no evidence that Crèvecoeur troubled the calm of the Poets' Corner, but it is certain that he was a frequent contributor to the other parts of the papers of his day. One of the most important contributions which he made was the series of comments and suggestions upon agricultural topics which he sent to the newspapers, throughout the course of his consulship, over the pseudonym of "Agricola."⁹⁴ In a letter written shortly before the one in which

⁹² ". . . whenever I can get any French papers I translate as you may see in our Papers whatever is most Edifying & most conducive to Establish here a National Respect for the Nation." (Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, N. Y., February 17, 1784.)

⁹³ This account, taken from the 1787 edition of the *Lettres*, was reprinted in the *New Jersey Journal*, March 26, 1788.

⁹⁴ These are described in the Appendix, pages 322-346. "Agricola" sometimes wrote on other topics, but it was generally the American Farmer whose voice was heard in this series.

describes his use of the newspapers which he was fortunate enough to rescue from the wreck of the French packet, he enclosed a pamphlet, of which he was part author, in regard to taxation. Its main idea was set forth to him by a friend, "a simple but shrewd countryman," who declined to write it out when he was urged to do so by the consul. When his patriotism was appealed to, however, he consented on condition that Crèvecoeur should write the "observations." In four and a half days the pamphlet was composed and published. "It makes here great noyse," Crèvecoeur wrote to his friend the duke.

Besides his work as translator and original contributor, Crèvecoeur seems to have attempted the work of purveyor for a new periodical which he was instrumental in founding.

"I have Persuaded a Printer here to undertake a Monthly Magazine, which will become very usefull & Entertaining: the agent of y^e English Pacquets has Promised him all y^e Papers from London & I who have set the scheme on foot, will put into his hands whatever I can Receive from Paris, but whilst there I forgot to take the necessary steps towards procuring every Journal, Mercure: Gazette & every other thing which might become proper food for us Americans — cou'd I with^t. Impropriety apply to you Mylord Duke; it is not for me I am asking but for the continent at Large since no other Printer here can Rival the one which I protect, & whom I have persuaded to undertake this new Publication; . . . Men here Love to be Instructed & let us have the proper Materials from whatever part in order to accomplish this Monthly Publication: the Plan is altogether new here: in a little Time more I hope to enjoy the pleasure of being the cause of y^e Foundation of 5 Medical Societies 1 Botanical Garden, & a Monthly Magazine for that Purpose we must be Indebted to your Kindness in forwarding us whatever may be usefull Pleasing & Instructif; Recepts, Secrets, Anecdotes, Singular Cases &^a. . . ⁹⁵

Public spirit was always conspicuous in Crèvecoeur. Two letters written towards the close of the first winter that he was in office, give interesting evidence of this fact.

⁹⁵ I have attempted without success to trace the further history of this undertaking.

"The spring is approaching," he wrote to Robert Livingston, "this Idea Implies that of succeeding heats and desirable Shades; Had that Scheme taken place which I proposed for the Fields 15 years ago, what an increase of value would not the Adjacent Grounds now bare? is there no hopes that your Taste, your Rank in the State, and your Popularity may not contribute to revive this simple and useful undertaking? The Society over which you now preside, would perhaps adopt it — would you propose barely planting the Trees, their beautiful Effect would quickly induce the Church, the Corporation, as well as many Citizens, to contribute toward the Completion of these Public Walks, which would become a great Ornament to this City — As a Free Mason as well as an Antient Citizen I would chearfully bear my proportion — With Equal Chearfulness I would willingly take upon myself replacing those Trees, which are now wanting on the Battery."

St. JOHN."

Livingston replied the same day, expressing some doubt whether this laudable suggestion could be carried into effect. He promised his support, however, and asked for the details of Crèvecoeur's plan. To this Crèvecoeur replied:

"I see with pleasure your Intentions of attempting the Scheme I have proposed, but without a survey of the line of the Houses, surrounding the Fields,⁹⁶ it is impossible for me to convey you my Ideas of Plantations but very imperfectly — I once surveyed that Spot, but every Original has long since been lost, & the Copies were given to the Everlasting Club — It is the work of but few hours to obtain the Survey I am speaking of, I confess, but to go myself on the spot for that purpose, would be imprudent and employing the City Surveyor would be attended with Impropriety be so good then as to obtain me the survey I want — willingly I will pay the surveyors & shortly after I will send you the Plan I mean to propose — Should the Trees only be planted this Year I am sure that their Beautiful Effect and cooling Shades will induce many People next Year to raise a sufficient Fund for the purpose of enclosing the whole with a plain & decent Railing."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ The name given to the triangle later called "the Park," now included in City Hall Park.

⁹⁷ Compare this with the "Agricola" paper written on the same subject. Appendix, pp. 332-333.

In the history of quarantine in this country some account ought to be taken of the letter written by Crèvecoeur to Richard Morris, which was laid before the New York Assembly, relative to the establishment of a health office in New York harbor:

"It is a Fact and a very Melancholy one, of which all the News Papers are full, that the Plague is spreading farther and farther in Europe and Asia, that it has penetrated even on board the Russian Fleet, that it Rages in Dalmatia, and has reached some of the Territories of the Venetian Republic, if not that City itself; such is the State of these alarming facts, It is an easy matter to Judge with what Facility this Epidemical Contagion may be introduced into this City. — The trade which will very likely be carried from the Levant, as well as from the Adriatic Sea, with this Continent and City, may, if we don't prevent it, bring us over this bane of Mankind — The Ease & Facility with which Vessels can come from the Sea into the East River announces the necessity of establishing a Health Office, with such Powers and Regulations as will oblige all Vessels to Drop Anchor until thoroughly examined, and to Land their Crews if necessary on Pest Island, where proper Physicians & an Hospital should be built — . . ."

Morris replied to the foregoing:

"I am obliged to you for the useful hints you have given me; I have thought that any Comments I could make, would not be so efficient, nor so Conducive to Rouse the Attention of the House of Assembly, as your very Identical Letter, I have thought therefore you'd not Blame me for having enclosed it to Colonel Hathorn, the speaker of the House, who will I am sure make a good use of it — "98

⁹⁸ Copies of both of these letters are in the Library at Mantes.

CHAPTER VIII

JOURNEY TO BOSTON

WHILE Seton had done what he could to help Crèvecoeur in his inquiries for his scattered family during the anxious days that followed Crèvecoeur's arrival at New York, their efforts were unsuccessful until seventeen days later, when they learned, through a letter¹ accidentally discovered among some papers left by the English at the New York post-office, that the children had been rescued by Captain Gustavus Fellowes² of Boston and taken to his home. This was the man, it will be remembered, whose services Lieutenant George Little, after his rescue by Crèvecoeur in 1781, promised to enlist in the effort to find his wife and children. The package, containing letters from Crèvecoeur to them and a bill of exchange, was duly delivered to Mr. Fellowes, who set out at once, as has been described,³ to execute his commission. About the same time that he discovered Fellowes' letter describing the rescue of his two children, Crèvecoeur probably received Létombe's⁴ letter written from Boston the twentieth of November, telling about his visit to the Fellowes' home, and giving news in regard to Crèvecoeur's family.⁵ To the Duke de la Rochefoucauld he wrote December 17, 1783:

¹ The letter was dated Dec. 17, 1781; see *Lettres*, III: 17.

² This is the gentleman disguised in the *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* under the name of "Flower."

³ Chapter VI, p. 63.

⁴ The French consul at Boston. The letter is reproduced in the *Lettres*, III: 32.

⁵ The original was seen by Robert de Crèvecoeur; see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 352.

“ Un Evenement funeste don Javois en France un fort pressentiment, a eu sur mon ame un si grand Effet que Je ne puis prendre sur moy de m'occuper d'autre chose si non des Reflexions melancholiques que cette perte m'inspire — Jay retrouvé ⁶ mes deux Enfants en bonne santé — mais leur Mère Permettez moy de tirer un rideau sur ce”

Although his immediate anxiety in regard to his children was relieved, they were constantly in his mind throughout the long and exceptionally severe winter that followed, precluding all possibility of his getting to Boston to see them.⁷ His letters contain frequent references to them and reflect his solicitude for their welfare.

“Cest une consolation pour moy de Penser que vous daignerés Protéger mes Enfants — Permettez a un père qui ne s'occupe que d'eux, de vous les presenter sous leurs noms — *Ally*, celuy qui est en France, a été le compagnion de mes Infortunes — *Louis*, celuy qui est icy est plus jeune et m'est également cher — *Fanny* ma fille a 14 ans. Jimplore dans tous les cas possible vos bontés pour eux, et celles de votre Famille, et L'espoir que jay de nestre pas refusé, est actuellement une de mes plus douces consolations — Pardonnés cette Liberté. Je n'ay d'autres desirs dans se Monde que de greffer sur la tête de ces Enfants, une partie des bontés que tant de Personnes ont bien voulu avoir pour le Père.” ⁸

⁶ This may be taken to refer to his having found where they were, rather than to his having actually seen them.

⁷ The early winter was violently tempestuous; he refers, December 17th, to there having been more than thirty shipwrecks. With the coming of the new year he wrote to France, “the present Season of frost & snow puts a Stop almost to every communication.” (Letter of Jan. 15, 1784, to the duke). A few days later he speaks again of the “excessive storms and tempests” which were still assailing them (January 19, 1784). A month later he speaks of the ice still detaining not only the packet, but every other vessel in the harbor (February 12, 1784). Toward the end of March the “Immense severity of y^e season” is again referred to.

⁸ December 17, 1784.

In addition to the natural concern which any father might be expected to feel in regard to his children's welfare, Crève-cœur felt some anxiety about their legal status. From his having married a Protestant and their being born of that union, outside of the kingdom, it was to be feared that there would be trouble when they came to inherit their grandfather's property in France.

"My Lord Duke," he wrote to the same friend, "Permit me to recommend again my dear children to your Patronage & Protection, Permit me to beg from your Grace a Line or two directed to them to the end they may hereafter shew they have been acknowledged as my children by so respectable an authority — I have y^e certificate of y^e Marriage, but y^e Evidences are dead — I have a sworn affidavit of y^e certificate being the handwriting of y^e Minister who signed it — I have a certificate under y^e Gov^r. seal which certifies that in 69 & for many years after, the said Minister, officiated Publickly administered y^e sacrament, joined People in Lawfull wedlock &a: I am Endeavoring to Procure every authentick document I can — but still it will be said, that I married a Protestant & what then must these Poor inoffensive children do will never the French Gov: open a Philosophical eye on this grand subject — these are the thoughts which distract me & make me so ardently wish that your Grace & some other Persons of your Grace's family wou'd be so kind as to write something which might corroborate their being my Lawfull children —" ⁹

At last the way opened for the longed-for visit to Boston. Toward the end of March he set out in a sleigh and reached Boston early in April.

"After having gone through an amazing Rigorous winter which had shut up every communication," he wrote to the duke,¹⁰ "I have at Last Reached this city where I have enjoyed the singular happiness of seeing & embracing my dear children: no, this war, I am sure, has not produced a circumstance altogether so wonderfull as that, of their having been Patronized & fetched under this hospitable Roof, after the Death of their Mother: happy for them to have quitted a country Ravaged by the Indians to come and dwell in a Peacefull abode with the best couple the best people in Boston: —" ¹⁰

⁹ March 15, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

¹⁰ April 14; in the Library at Mantes.

The letter from Mr. Fellowes which Crèvecoeur found at the post-office at New York was reproduced in the third volume of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*.¹¹ The account of the rescue of the two children is so interesting that it is worth quoting at some length:¹²

"I received your letter of September 29, 1781, by the hands of the five officers of the naval vessel 'Protector'. I read it attentively. Your readiness to assist them in misfortune, and the important service you did them made on my mind an impression so strong that I at once took all the steps I thought needful to gain information by letter of the state of your family in Orange County. My effort was in vain; the war interrupted all communication. I then made up my mind to go there myself, and told my wife, who approved the plan.

A week after I left Boston I was lucky enough to meet the Sheriff of Orange County, Jesse Woodhull, Esq., who as Colonel of the militia was with his regiment at the post of Fishkill. Your letter, which I handed him, was the first he had got from you since you left the British prison at New York. He asked 50 questions about you and Ally, the state of your family, your misfortunes, etc. I learned from him the death of your wife and the sad condition of the children since the raid of the savages and the scarcity of food. Horror-struck at the news, I at once made up my mind to bring them away from that unlucky region, carry them to Boston, and bring them up with my own children. The Sheriff approved my plan. He said, 'You cannot do a greater service to my old friend and good neighbor, Mr. St. John. The Indians and the war have broken up all our schools and the Lord only knows how we are to educate our children.'

Fortunately the snow was deep, and the roads well trodden. I at once busied myself with arrangements for getting the children to Boston as comfortably as possible; and especially to clothe them warmly. My wife had provided for that, and luckily, — for everything was so out of order that I could not have found in the whole county of Orange either woolen stuffs or suitable flannels. Before leaving Sheriff Woodhull who invited me to his headquarters, I in-

¹¹ Page 17.

¹² I have followed the translation which Mr. F. B. Sanborn gave in his article on Crèvecoeur in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, July 1, 1906, adopting his compression of the original text and shortening it still further.

quired what had been the expenses of the children since the death of their mother, and offered to put 40 guineas in his hands. He would not take it, saying that the sale of some horses and cattle, which had escaped the plunderers, had brought money enough to pay for their support, which could not indeed have cost much, judging by the condition I found them in. As to your farm and outlands, I advised him never to allow their sale without your consent. I received the amount of your bill of exchange, and shall use it for the good of the children.

Since they have been with us we have treated them as our own. They are good, and fortunately we have a boy and girl of their ages, with whom they live on the best of terms. My wife and I receive them as if they were children we had lost and recovered; were we so unfortunate as never to see or hear of you again, we should educate them as our own. Not knowing what religious principles you had given them, I take them to church with my household, and they offer to God the same worship that we do. If you receive this, please tell us your wishes on this point; we shall be glad to conform to them. I shall send you copies of this letter until I get some reply."

The story of Crèvecoeur's meeting with his children has been told in the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*.¹³ ¹⁴ Fanny's account of their adventures is as follows:

"It was time, dear father, for Providence to begin to show favour to brother Lewis and me, when Mr. Fellowes got to Westchester where we were. For we had neither shoes nor stockings, and were almost naked. The weather was cold, and the other children there were in much the same condition. My little brother, being younger, did not feel the misery of our lot so much as I, but he cried a good deal. And I who remembered so well your tender care and that of poor Mother, — how I did grieve when I thought of all that! and 'twas very often. J. D. and his wife, not knowing who this stranger might be, that came to fetch us away, did all they could to make us stay with them. They tried to alarm little brother, and he began to cry, and say, 'I don't

¹³ III: 17, ff.

¹⁴ Two years before Crèvecoeur published his account, the substance of it appeared in the *Feuille de jour*, a Paris paper which obtained it from an American named Williams, a friend of Gustavus Fellowes, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur.

want to go with that man.' Mr. Fellowes had to take him by force, poor Philip Lewis, from Mrs. D.'s arms, he crying hard, and she crying too. I said to them, 'We cannot be worse off than we are here; why should you want to keep us? You have nothing to give us; you can hardly supply your own needs. This man must wish us well, — else he would not have come such a long way. Perhaps God sent him.'

I remember this too. I got into the strange man's sleigh with the greatest eagerness, for I thought it would take me away from the place where I had lost my mother, and had suffered so many things. O, Father! you don't know how good and warm were the clothes this good man, whom God sent to us, had brought with him. I hugged myself with joy when I had put them on. I heard afterwards it was his dear wife, my adopted mother, who, inspired by Heaven, gave him the idea. You could not yourself have been kinder than this blessed man was, in our whole journey. When we had a big river to cross on the ice, which he knew gave me a great fright, he always told us a pretty story, to take our minds off, and shorten the time. When we got to Hartford, some of his friends there asked him, 'What have you got in your sleigh?' 'Two lost children,' he said, — 'I lost them, and have just got 'em back. I am taking them to Boston, where my wife will soon make them forget all they had to bear. We have seven children there now, and the two little lost lambs will make nine.' That was just what he said.

In Boston how I liked being pitied, being put into warm clothes, having enough to eat when I was hungry, — and especially not to be afraid of the Indians. Lewis began to laugh as soon as we got there. I scolded him well for having cried at Chester, and for wanting to stay there. They put me to sleep the first night with Abigail, the oldest daughter, who is near my age. I love her as if she were my own sister; she is politeness and gentleness all over. Lewis was put to bed with little Gustavus, who is only five months older. The next morning Mrs. Fellowes combed our hair, and put on clothes like those of the others, and when we had got rested, we were all sent to school together. Not only did she wash and dress us herself every morning, but she had us sit by her at the table, and gave us the best there was on it; for she said, — 'These poor children have had so hard a time, they must now have more care than our own.' When she went visiting she often took me instead of my good sister Abby; especially if we were going to sail in the Harbour, or go to Castle Island, or Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Cambridge or Dorchester. Abby, who is goodness itself, would often say, — 'Yes, Mother, take Fanny with you. I shall like to stay at

home and take care of the little ones ; Fanny needs a good time more than I do.' We now take turns going out, or else go together.

I have become useful to Mother, too. For a year and a half I have helped her every morning, along with Abby, to wash and dress the younger children, and send them to school. She has taught me to sew, to knit and to spin; I mend clothes, make bread, and do a little cooking. She has a baby eight months old, a little girl, and they gave her my name, for I was her godmother. They named a whaleship Fanny, too, — she sailed two months ago for Brazil. I hope she will come back with a good lot of oil! When little Fanny is weaned I expect to have the whole care of her, and have her sleep with me, and be no more trouble to her mother. I want you to call her granddaughter."

The two months¹⁵ which Crèvecoeur passed in Boston were absorbingly interesting to him. In addition to the pleasure of thanking in person the friends who had treated his children so kindly, he had the good fortune, upon coming out of church on Sunday morning, to meet again the American officers whom he had befriended in Normandy — Little, Lemon, Story, Wales and Collins. Learning that he was to be in this church, they had come there on purpose to see him. Many others of those who were present came up and spoke to him, congratulating him upon his happy return and upon finding his children in such good hands. Mr. Fellowes then invited the five officers to dine with them at his house. Not long afterwards Crèvecoeur visited General Lincoln and General Heath. The first was busy, he wrote, building a grist mill, the second had returned with ardour to his former occupation of cultivating his fields. He was greatly impressed with the quickness and naturalness of the return of these American generals (and still more of their commander) to their former occupations, and the energy with which men everywhere were endeavoring to build up the

¹⁵ This is approximately the length of his stay. He left New York late in March (the last letter from there is dated the 25th), and wrote June 15th that he had just returned from Boston.

new country whose independence they had so lately obtained.

Another person whom Crèvecoeur speaks of meeting at this time was John Peck, the ship builder. During the Revolution, Peck had built the *Belisarius*, the *Rattlesnake* and the *Hazard*, three of the best ships the Americans had. Crèvecoeur now proposed that the French government should engage Peck to build one of his fast sailing frigates or a ship for the packet-service. He also suggested that the government buy from this builder the secret of the remarkable speed which his ships were always able to make. "In point of swiftness," he says, "these new vessels are the Birds of the sea, from 16 to 25 days is the common Length of their Passage from here to Europe." "Vessels built on this Plan," he adds, "carry more sail, that is they cannot be overset, they carry Likewise 4 times the weight that others generally do." These representations and others which he continued to send to France had such weight with the government that Peck was commissioned in July to build a packet-ship which was named, in honor of the minister of marine, the *Maréchal de Castries*.

At the time when Crèvecoeur intended to go back to New York, his daughter was taken ill. During the weeks while he was waiting for her to recover sufficiently to undertake the long return journey, he made use of the enforced delay in exploring Boston, in observing its activities, and in detailing an account of what he saw and heard to his friends in France.¹⁶ He describes, among other things, the method of converting into bar-iron the quantity of old useless guns and ammunition left behind by the British in their flight.¹⁷ He also tells explicitly how they dig their wells. After

¹⁶ See a letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, May 1, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

¹⁷ Letter to the duke, April 14, 1784; at Mantes.

excavating until they reach clay bottom, he says, they build up the sides of the well and then bore through the clay until the water gushes out. "As soon as the Least sign of water appears, the Man below ascends with the utmost speed, for no sooner it has arriv'd, than it gushes out with the greatest Force, compressed in its bed — y^e Water raises sometimes above the surface of the well, which often is 50 feet deep." He has some interesting observations to make on the proposed erection of the Universalist church:

"They are Making a collection for a new Church, which is to be Erected soon — in a beautyfull part of the town — the people who have set it on Foot, call themselves Universalists, a new name, not Improperly given to the Principles they openly Profess; they believe all religions Equally agreeable to the supreme being, they are bound by no particular Tenets or Creeds: The great Laws of universal morality are the only Rules of their Conduct; and as the same Laws bind Mankind in every part of the globe, under an Infinite variety of worships: they are determin'd to admit any Clergyman to Preach every Sunday, who will Offer himself, their salaries will be generous & Paid regularly as soon as service is over [!] — if their Forefathers the good Puritans of the Last age, were to appear again, what wou'd they say to the Erection of this new Church of Publick Deisme; . . ." ¹⁸

Later in the same letter he adds, "I Just received a copy of y^e subscription Paper which is now circulating through the Town in order to Establish the church above described. . . . I cou'd wish it was translated & inserted in some Foreign Papers."¹⁹ Besides the subscription paper referred to he sent to the duke an old picture of Boston made in 1744. The imperfection of the execution of the sketch led him to suggest that a French painter be sent to America to make "more accurate, & more Elegant Perspectives of the different capitals of these states." He expresses his conviction that

¹⁸ Letter to the duke, May 1, 1784; at Mantes.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

prints made from such drawings would have a good sale in Europe as well as in America.

"I am in hopes," he writes further, "of getting here or at Nantucket an Indian Bible & Psalter — Those 2 Books were Translated & Printed in the Nattick Language by y^e Rev. M^r. Elliot Pastor of Roxbury near this city (Boston) in y^e year 1663 at Cambridge which is the 1st Colledge erected on this Continent. The venerable Author was 60 years Minister of y^e same church. wrote all the Bible with one Eagle's Quill — the Impression & characters are very fine."

He concludes by promising to send a silver coin "strucke here when the 4 new England Provinces confederated themselves in y^e year 1666."

Before leaving Boston Crèvecoeur had a miniature of his daughter made and presented it to Abigail Fellowes, at her request. On the reverse was engraved this inscription: "Presented by Miss Fanny S^t John, to her beloved Friend & adoptive sister Miss Abigail Fellowes, Boston April 14, 1784." He also succeeded in persuading Mrs. Fellowes to let him have her likeness made, so that Fanny might wear it together with one which she already had of her adopted father. This miniature was inscribed, "M^{rs}. Sarah Fellowes the best of women & my adoptive Mother, Boston, April 25, 1784."²⁰ According to the account which Miss Delesdernier's book, *Fannie St. John*, gives, Abigail Fellowes went back to New York with Crèvecoeur and his daughter, and the two girls made a visit to Theodosia Burr. This writer hints at a love-affair between Fanny and the teacher of the school to which she and Abigail went while they were in Boston. Crèvecoeur is represented as unwilling to have his daughter marry a man so undistinguished. One should remember, however, that Fanny was at this time not quite thirteen and a half, so this suggestion can hardly be regarded seriously. It is not impossible that this situation

²⁰ *Ibid.*

may have existed later, and that Crèvecoeur may have taken Fanny to New York with him after his visit to Boston in 1787 in order to break off this attachment. The rest of the account quoted wanders from the known facts, for Fanny is said to have gone back to France with her father (which she did not do), and to have been introduced by him into the brilliant society of Paris, where she created a sensation by her beauty, the romantic fact of her birth in the land of promise, and by her perfect command of two languages (one wonders how she could have obtained this; her father, as can easily be seen, could not command even one). In Paris the image of her Boston lover is said to have faded from her mind, and she is said to have made a marriage "at once happy and illustrious," becoming the wife of M. Otto, an eminent French diplomatist. The fact is that Fanny never saw Europe until 1792, two years after her marriage to M. Otto at New York.

Louis probably went back to New York with his father and sister. He was sent to France in July, to join Alexander at Caen. "Louis, Ally's brother," Crèvecoeur wrote to the duke, "is going to France; the same vessel which will carry this letter to you, will take him to Lorient. Everything is so expensive here, and the schools have been so turned upside down, that I think I am doing wisely in sending him to join his brother who is at Caen."²¹ Upon his return to New York, Crèvecoeur received instructions, as he had hoped, to have a packet-boat built by John Peck. He had hoped, also, to persuade the French government to get Peck to sell his method of ship-building to them, and also to build two large frigates at Nantes. Crèvecoeur felt that these ships would command so high a price that the minister would be led to adopt Peck's method in the royal dock-yards. Another subject which engaged his attention at this time was

²¹ July 15, 1784, translated.

the question of lumber for ship-building. About six weeks after his return to New York he wrote from New London that he was on his way to Boston again to make inquiries on this head, according to instructions which he had received from the government. Strong prejudice against American lumber for ship-building purposes existed in France, due in part to the wretched quality of certain imports that had been made from America by unscrupulous dealers during the war.²² Crèvecoeur did his utmost to remove this prejudice; there are frequent references to the subject in his correspondence during his term of office. He sent to France at various times many samples and much explicit information in regard to American woods. One letter²³ speaks of two knees of white swamp oak, two curled maple planks, and fifteen white pine boards from Albany without a single knot. The American white pine is the strongest and the finest, he says, that is known. At Piscataqua, he adds sadly, there are masts to the value of 5000 louis, that are going to destruction because the people at the ship-yards at Brest declare that they are not worth anything. They are not only excellent, he insists, but also three times cheaper than those which come from Russia. This leads him to raise the question why it is not better policy, all things considered, to buy from their allies rather than to depend upon the north for such material, where it is, furthermore, growing more expensive every day. Especially does he extol the use of live-oak for ship-building purposes,²⁴ that of Georgia particularly, and warmly recommends the government to send an agent to negotiate the purchase of large quantities

²² August 8, 1784 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 101, note 1).

²³ December 14, 1784; at Mantes.

²⁴ See an undated report on this subject by Crèvecoeur in the Library at Mantes, and a letter of March 15, 1785, to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld.

in the region of the bay of St. Mary, of which he later sent a map that he had copied.

It may be that Crèvecoeur took Fanny and Abigail Fellowes back to Boston with him when he returned in August on the mission just referred to, for Fanny seems to have been an inmate of the Fellowes household until the summer of 1787,²⁵ when her father took her to New York to live with him. Some account of the man to whose kindness Crèvecoeur owed so much may be of interest at this point. His granddaughter, Miss Emily Delesdernier, has given a number of details in regard to him in her sketch of Fanny St. John. I quote from this account, and from two of Mr. Sanborn's articles on Crèvecoeur.²⁶ Gustavus Fellowes was born in Boston in 1736. His two brothers, Cornelius and Nathaniel, were owners of merchant ships, and afterwards coffee-planters in Cuba. A younger brother, Caleb, was the founder of the Fellowes Athenæum in Roxbury. At twenty-one Gustavus was master and part owner of a ship in which he sailed from Boston to London. He married, in 1768, Sarah Pierpont, of Boston, who survived him until April 1828. His wife, the family tradition says, was presented at the English court, where she was known as "the beautiful American." When American ships in the English ports took for freight the tea that furnished the celebrated Boston tea-party, Captain Fellowes refused to carry any and sailed into port with only ballast in his ship. Before the war he had been appointed one of the city fathers, and

²⁵ It is certain, at least, from a letter which Crèvecoeur wrote to Gov. Bowdoin in the summer of 1786 (July 1, 1786, see *Proceedings of the Mass. Hist. Soc.*, XIII: 238), that Fanny remained at the Fellowes' during the time of his visit to France, from 1785 to 1787. See also the letters from Fanny to her brothers now in the possession of the Crèvecoeur family at Paris.

²⁶ *Proc. of the Mass. Hist. Soc.*, Jan. and Feb., 1906, and *Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, July, 1906.

during the Revolution he furnished money to the state for army outfits and supplies, for which he never demanded payment. Fellowes' home in Boston was on the corner of Harvard and Washington Streets.²⁷ The house was large (as he had a family of nine children, including the two unfortunates whom he had rescued in Orange County, it needed to be!), with a many-gabled roof and a carefully finished interior. The *Independent Ledger*, April 1, 1781, mentions a large and convenient store on the north side of the town dock, as the place of business of "Fellowes and Pierpont, auctioneers." As Gustavus Fellowes' wife had been a Pierpont before her marriage, this may have been his business headquarters, and the Pierpont mentioned may have been one of his wife's connections, but there is nothing certain to indicate that this may not have been his brother's place of business. In a list of confiscated estates which had belonged to Thomas Brinley in Suffolk County, there is an item declaring that on September 28, 1782, there had been sold to Gustavus Fellows, "Land, dwelling-house, distillery house and wharf," in Boston on the south side of Hollis Street.²⁸ At the period when Captain Fellowes befriended Crèvecoeur's children, he was a man of considerable wealth, and his brothers were even richer. But a few years after the war ended, his business suffered and he was obliged to sell his Harvard Street house. He went, thereupon, to Machias, on the Columbia River in Maine, about 1790, where he engaged in the Labrador fisheries for a number of years. At his brother Nathaniel's request he returned, later, to Boston and lived at Roxbury with him. About 1805 Nathaniel died. Some difficulty about the disposition of the property resulted from the fact of his

²⁷ Or on Washington St., near Harvard, according to Mr. Sanborn.

²⁸ See James Henry Stark's *Loyalists of the American Revolution*, Boston, 1910, p. 397.

having made two wills at different times, which differed materially. The result was that Gustavus received little or nothing. The later years of his life he passed in the Hollis Street house that he had bought in 1782. At his death, in 1816, he was buried in the Davis-May²⁹ tomb at the foot of the Common, on Boylston Street. Fanny Crèvecoeur maintained her connection with the Fellowes family for many years after her marriage. "Her letters," Miss Delesdernier says, "were of the most delightful character; containing accounts of court life in Vienna, touching here and there upon important European topics, as well as affairs of private interest, and often accompanied with beautiful gifts." These treasured letters, she adds, were often lent to admiring friends. They were finally misplaced by a borrower and never again seen. Their loss was long and much regretted. If these letters should ever come to light they would probably be of great interest, for Fanny seems to have inherited her father's gift for making the situation which she is describing live again for her readers.

²⁹ One of his daughters had married into the May family.

CHAPTER IX

ON FURLOUGH

UPON Crèvecoeur's return to New York in June he may have taken up his abode in Maiden Lane, where it is certain that he was established by the fifteenth of July, at least, when he wrote to Jefferson that he was living at Number 20, "next door where we boarded."¹ This was also his place of business, as a notice shows which appeared in the *New York Independent Journal* for August 21, 1784, concluding, "the office of the Consul of France is now kept at no. 20 Maiden Lane." Crèvecoeur probably continued to live here throughout the following winter and spring. He took his meals, he wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in March,² in "la maison voisine" (which may have been the house "next door"), where several of the members of Congress, the consul general, when he came to New York, M. Van Berkel and others were wont to dine. At the end of May, however, he wrote to Ethan Allen, "my direction is no. 202 Queen Street."³

From the time of his return from Boston, Crèvecoeur made frequent complaints in regard to his health. He had suffered a great deal during this first winter, but he had seemed to recover strength under the influence of the milder weather which succeeded the long severe winter. By mid-summer, however, the heat affected him very painfully; "The heat and the condition of my nerves have hardly

¹ Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 2, vol. 74, no. 7.

² March 17, 1785, at Mantes, translated.

³ *Vermont, Governor and Council*, III: 388.

allowed me to work at all,"⁴ he wrote. Even at the beginning of October, after his return from his second visit to Boston, he wrote, "I go out so little, see so little of what is going on, that I am good for nothing." He could not even attend to his correspondence at this time, and was obliged to employ an amanuensis.⁵ Finally he wrote to the duke:

"My health, which for long has been very uncertain, is now so infirm that half the time I cannot apply myself to my duties. I realize every day that I have become less able to discharge these, and I would beg you, if I dared, to obtain through your kindness, permission from the Maréchal de Castries to return to France next March, for the sake of my health, in order to have the benefit of the advice of physicians who are more skilled than those which are to be found here."⁶

Crèvecoeur joined to this request others, the following month, to the Baron de Breteuil, and the Princess de Beauvau. In December Marbois, as consul general, came to New York to take up his post. This offered an extra reason for urging the matter of a furlough at this time, when Crèvecoeur was convinced that he would not be missed. "I am of the very slightest use," he wrote, "will you not make use of this new argument to persuade M. de Castries to allow me to go to France for six or nine months, or for a year." "My condition is such that I have resolved several times to give up my commission altogether. Only the thought of my children prevents me from doing so."⁷ Whether the minister of marine was unconvinced at first of the necessity of this move, or whether the matter was simply overlooked, the following spring found Crèvecoeur still pleading for release.⁸ Toward the latter part of April he received the

⁴ Letter to the duke, July 15, 1784, at Mantes, translated.

⁵ November 14, 1784, translated.

⁶ November 16, 1784, translated.

⁷ Letter to the duke, Dec. 5, 1784; at Mantes.

⁸ Letter to the duke, March 15, 1785; at Mantes.

welcome news that his request had been granted, owing chiefly to the representations of the Princess de Beauvau. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld seems to have greatly regretted the necessity for Crèvecoeur's absence. To justify his insistence, Crèvecoeur exclaimed that he hoped he might die rather than have to undergo again such suffering as he had endured the previous winter.

The months that intervened between the time when Crèvecoeur turned his face toward France, and the time of his actual departure, which did not take place until the latter part of June 1785, in spite of ill-health and profound discouragement, were not entirely idle. One of his chief concerns, during this time, was the establishment of his children's legal status. In the autumn of 1784, before he had returned to New York from his second visit to Boston, the Baron de Breteuil had written to him, advising him what to do in this regard. Just what the nature of this advice was, cannot be learned from the summary of his letter which Robert de Crèvecoeur gives,⁹ but the series of letters, clippings and documents, which Crèvecoeur sent to France from this time until his own return, gives an indication, at least, that the baron recommended Crèvecoeur to collect all the official and public statements that he could obtain in regard to his children. This must explain the eagerness with which he courted and welcomed all kinds of public notice for his children. To friends in France he wrote, giving the names of each of the children, and asking them to write to them so that they might produce such letters in recognition of their standing. To Du Perré de Lisle, "lieutenant de bailliage" of Caen, and to Target at Paris, and to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, he sent notices of land-purchases in which the children were involved, documents in which the "freedom" of certain cities had been

⁹ September 1, 1784 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 352).

granted to them, newspaper extracts in which these proceedings and others are noted, etc., etc. A few citations will show the seriousness with which Crèvecoeur set himself to this work.

"You will not reproach me, I hope Sir, if I involve you to the extent of four thousand livres in a purchase of a large tract of land which will come to less than thirteen sous an acre. M. Target is going in for the same amount and I, too, for my children. If you do not approve of what I have done, I will take them over on my own account."¹⁰

"I am sending you . . . a package for my children, containing their diplomas of citizenship of the city of New Haven,¹¹ and a contract of purchase of property in this city the [letter is written from New York] made in their names, and a certificate under the seal of the city of their being legal subjects and freeholders of this state. This added to some other titles and papers which I have sent, will help to establish their status. . . If what the Baron de Breteuil declares is true, which I do not doubt, their future will depend upon the validity of their father's marriage here. That once established, leaves nothing to be feared in France."¹²

In February he wrote to the duke that M. de Marbois, the consul general, strongly advised him to present a request to the king, through the Baron de Breteuil, for the issue of letters-patent to place the legal status of his children beyond question.¹³ To this end Crèvecoeur forwarded, in addition to copies of records of marriage and baptism, documents of every kind that gave recognition to his children. Accompanying these documents was a paper sworn to by

¹⁰ Letter to the duke, Nov. 14, 1784; at Mantes; translated.

¹¹ Fanny had been enfranchised at New Haven in September; action had been taken in regard to the others later, apparently. Dr. Stiles' entry, March 15, 1785, "Reviewing a diploma of city freedom for M. Crèvecoeur and his three children, of whom his daughter was enfranchised as a female citizen of New Haven September last," makes one think that these first certificates were different from the ones which Crèvecoeur forwarded the following April, perhaps less elaborate.

¹² Letter to the duke, Dec. 17, 1784; at Mantes; translated.

¹³ Feb. 15, 1784; at Mantes.

Marbois, establishing the identity of St. John and St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, and declaring that the children of St. John were the children of St. Jean de Crèvecoeur. Crèvecoeur's letter of February fifteenth would be given in full, if it were not so long, as it is an interesting exposition of the difficulties that beset a man in those days who married out of the kingdom and out of the Church. It has been suggested that some of the difficulty was caused by disapproval of Crèvecoeur's marriage on the part of his father. He says, however, in regard to this point, "I forgot to tell you that I have added to these documents, the formal consent of my father given before a notary." ¹⁴

Before leaving this subject it may be well to call attention to the fact of the granting of the freedom of the city of Hartford this same month to Crèvecoeur and his two sons, as well as to Lafayette and his son George Washington.¹⁵ In April the certificates of the freedom of the city of New Haven, which had been granted the previous autumn, were sent. In regard to his own, Crèvecoeur wrote, "I am almost ashamed of the one they have sent me. It isn't worth reading, for what proves too much proves nothing. The good citizens of New Haven have mortified rather than pleased me. But what they have done for my children fills me with joy and gratitude." ^{16 17} So late as May twenty-third, only a few weeks before he set sail for France,

¹⁴ Translated from the letter of February 15, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

¹⁵ See the *Connecticut Courant*, March 1, 1785, also the record in the office of the town clerk, under date February 14th.

¹⁶ Letter to the duke, April 24, 1785; at Mantes; translated.

¹⁷ Citizenship was also granted by New Haven to the Prince and the Princess de Beauvau, the Dukes de la Rochefoucauld and de Liancourt, the Countess d'Houdetôt, the Marquis de Condorcet, the Count de Jarnac, the Marquis de St. Lambert, and M. de Lacretelle, at Crèvecoeur's request (see Hippeau's *Gouvernement de Normandie*, III: 137).

Crèvecoeur was still anxiously working on his children's behalf. "I am sending you a newspaper," he wrote, "that contains something relating to the status of my children."¹⁸ Finally, on the last day of May, he wrote to Ethan Allen (who had proposed in a conversation the day before that a town in Vermont be named after Crèvecoeur), saying that the honor which he would appreciate most highly would be the naturalization of his three children and of himself, in that state.¹⁹ Later in the summer Crèvecoeur wrote again to Allen on the same subject. His letter is so plain an exposition of his motives in desiring this recognition on the part of the state, that it may be quoted in justice to the writer:

"I cannot flatter myself that your Assembly would condescend to pass an act to Naturalize myself & Children, tho' on many accounts (too tedious to explain to you) it wou'd not only be highly honorable to them but highly conducive to the completion of their Bill of Naturalization in France which I am now soliciting in order that they may inherit my Father's succession which will be pretty considerable. They have had lately the honor of being made by diplomas freemen of the city of Hartford & New Haven. But if nevertheless in spite of every appearance, so great a favor thro' your good influence cou'd be Obtained, I shall take the liberty of sending you their names, their age, and the name of their Mother. all these things are expressed in their diplomas of N. Haven & are necessary for the completion of what I am soliciting in France. You'll pardon therefor a Father if thro' his Fatherly zeal he seems to outgo the bounds of common discretion. In speaking to you I am confident to unbosom myself to a Person who will not censure me nor think that by asking for my children the honor of being naturalized in Vermont, he has in his heart ought bordering on foolish vanity or presumption, but an honest intention of establishing his children in the full possession of the rights of Frenchmen born. In order to obtain so desirable an end here I must prove the public Notoriety of their being my Children, not by certificates of Marriage &c. but by public acts of their being so."²⁰

¹⁸ Letter to the duke, May 23, 1785; at Mantes; translated.

¹⁹ *Vermont, Governor and Council*, III: 387.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, (III: 389) July 17, 1785.

The governor and most of the council met in January of the following year at Bennington and discussed this matter and a number of other propositions which Crèvecoeur had made in regard to the development of the state. They approved of the measures proposed, and promised to use their influence in his behalf when the state legislature should meet the following October. The matter was concluded satisfactorily, although with some delay, and Allen forwarded to him in April, 1787, the act which declared Crèvecoeur and his three children naturalized citizens in the state of Vermont.²¹

The arrival of the Marquis de Lafayette in the summer of 1784, was an event which helped to console Crèvecoeur for much anxiety and discomfort. Lafayette, upon the occasion of his visit to Boston, went to see Mr. and Mrs. Fellowes, apparently at the request of Crèvecoeur, who wrote to the duke, "I shall be grateful to him for this all my life."²² The speeches which Lafayette made at Boston, at Fort Schuyler at the Indian council, and elsewhere, Crèvecoeur collected and sent back to France.²³ The addresses made at Fort Schuyler he translated into English and sent to the American newspapers.²⁴ One of Crèvecoeur's

²¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 361.

²² November 17, 1784; at Mantes; translated.

²³ Many of these appear in the book which Crèvecoeur published in 1801, *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie*, etc.

²⁴ The former servants of Congress were not supposed to publish anything without the consent of that body (see letter from Crèvecoeur to the duke, Nov. 14th). Lafayette was therefore embarrassed by this proceeding until Crèvecoeur, learning of his displeasure, hastened to send a notice to the papers, explaining that the speeches had been translated and inserted without Lafayette's knowledge. This incident was, perhaps, the basis of Jefferson's question to Monroe the following spring (April 15, 1785, Jefferson, *Works*, ed. Ford, IV:45), "By the way, what is this angry resolution Congress has taken in his [St. John's] behalf?" — a question which an examination of the *Journals of Congress* has failed to clear up.

many projects which he had the pleasure of discussing with Lafayette was a plan for a bureau of information to be established in France in the interests of French commerce. "M. le Marquis," he wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, "approves of my ideas for a bureau of information, of which I wish him to be the first president. We shall not have to wear out the minister then, with projects to which he can only pay a fleeting attention. Our samples and our reports will all go to this office, which will pass upon them and make them known in our forlorn provinces where manufactures are conducted without taste and without the precision required to establish our commerce upon a firm basis."²⁵ The day of Lafayette's departure, he was escorted with much ceremony by Governor Clinton, several of his fellow generals, Crèvecoeur and others, to Whitehall Straights, where the barge of the *Nymphé* awaited him. "The Marquis was handed on board the barge by his Excellency the Governor on one side, and on the other by the Consul of France."²⁶

The long delayed translation of the *Letters from an American Farmer* was forthcoming in 1784. The first of January Mme. d'Houdetôt wrote from Paris to Crèvecoeur's son, Alexander, at Caen, "Your good father's book is on sale and has the most flattering success. . . . Men of letters and men of the world are equally delighted with it."²⁷ Toward the end of April, Crèvecoeur wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, thanking him for what he had said about his book, adding, however, that he himself had not yet received any copies. He has heard, he says, that it

²⁵ Dec. 17, 1784; at Mantes; translated. This is described somewhat in detail, because it may have been the germ in Crèvecoeur's mind, of the Société Gallo-Américaine, which he helped to found about two years later.

²⁶ *Connecticut Courant*, Dec. 28, 1785.

²⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 353, translated.

contains a great many errors of all kinds, typographical and otherwise, in spite of the efforts of Lacretelle on his behalf. "I shall be content," he concludes, "if the letters of a plain farmer will pass in the crowd of books that are published daily. I am no author, but a plain scribbler, who has compiled a good many sheets, he hardly knows how." ²⁸ To Jefferson, the following month, he wrote acknowledging his kindness in calling attention to various errors in the book, "I lost so many manuscripts whilst I was in confinement, that it is no wonder errors in fact should be there. I lost my sketches of Maryland and so on southerly . . . could you not help me to them in case of a second edition?" ²⁹

Early in May Crèvecoeur sold his farm in Orange County. He had paid James and Phœbe Nesbit three hundred and fifty pounds for the property in 1769. He now sold it to Hezekiah Moffatt, one of his former neighbors, for five hundred pounds. There is nothing to tell whether Crèvecoeur ever saw Greycourt after leaving it in the winter of 1779, but it seems likely that he would have made an effort to see the place again before finally disposing of it. This, however, is pure speculation. The property remained in Mr. Moffatt's possession until it was bought by Mr. H. C. Griggs, whose daughter, Miss Mary Griggs, now owns the original title-deed. From Mr. Griggs it passed to Mr. J. W. Helme (Mr. G. M. Roe, assignee), until it came finally into the hands of the present owner, Mr. William R. Conklin. Mr. Conklin's holding in addition to adjoining property includes all but a small part of the original one hundred and twenty acres.

Although the farm at Pine Hill was sold at this time, preparatory to Crèvecoeur's return to France, a conversation

²⁸ April 24, 1785; at Mantes; translated.

²⁹ May 8, 1785, Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 74, no. 5.

which he had with Ethan Allen, a few weeks later, led to a step which was to associate his name with America long after he had left it for the last time. It seems to have occurred to Allen, who recognized the service that Crèvecoeur had rendered to this country, by his book and by other measures, that it would be a graceful act to name one of the towns of Vermont in his honor. In a conversation with Crèvecoeur, as we have already said, he evidently proposed this. The reply, May 31, 1785, suggested that the people of Vermont should express their appreciation of the services of their French allies by giving to the new towns and townships that were about to be laid out, names that would be reminiscent of the friends who had served the colonies during their struggle. The names that he proposed were Vergennes or Vergennesburg, Castri Polis, Gallipolis, Rochambeau, Noaillesburg, Targetsfield, Fannysburg, Harcourt, Ludovico Polis, Condorcet, Brothersfield, Danville, and Sophysburg. Referring to the suggestion that one of the towns be named for him, Crèvecoeur said that as the name of St. John had been given to many places in this country, he would recommend the use of St. Johnsbury, instead. The recommendation was adopted and the town retains that name to this day.³⁰ How much came of Crèvecoeur's special efforts on behalf of Vermont and of the proposed college, I have not been able to determine. "I offer to have the Seal of your State," he wrote to Ethan Allen, "elegantly engraved on silver by the king's best engravers and to change somewhat the

³⁰ Mr. Stephen Todd, of St. Johnsbury, has long been a student of Crèvecoeur. There is a society of ladies there, also, who are interested in the man for whom the town was named. Of the other names that Crèvecoeur suggested, two were adopted; Vergennes, for the former minister to the United States, and Danville, in honor of the Duke d'Anville.

device thereof." "I offer with equal pleasure to get another engraved for the College the State of Vermont intends erecting and I will take upon myself the imagining the device thereof. I will do my best endeavors to procure from the King some marks of his bounty and some useful presents to the above College. The name of the new College I would beg to send it along with the new seal which I shall send you from Paris." ³¹

Shortly before taking his departure for France, Crèvecoeur did an important service to the catholics in New York City. The early laws in regard to persons of this faith in the United States were very severe. Not until 1784 were they allowed to worship publicly. Before that time they had assembled wherever they could in New York, at extemporized chapels and in private houses. In that year, however, a law was passed, the sixth of April, by the state of New York, allowing all religious denominations in the state to appoint trustees to care for the temporal welfare of the congregations by whom they were elected. Under the provisions of this statute, Crèvecoeur, José Roiz Silva, James Stewart, and Henry Duffin were duly registered, June 10, 1785, as "trustees of

³¹ Louis XVI was a generous patron to at least two American colleges. In 1784 he sent one hundred books to the college at Philadelphia, and a hundred to the college of William and Mary. A search in the library of the University of Pennsylvania, a few years ago, revealed the fact that almost all of these are in existence to-day, although the catalogue gave no evidence of their having come from this source, beyond a single entry which described one of the books as "the gift of Louis XIV" [!] Some of the books contained a plate of recent date indicating the royal giver, others were identified by the date, the style of binding, and comparison of the title with the entry in the minutes of the trustees in the summer of 1784. The college at Williamsburg has no trace of their gift. When the books first arrived, they were stored in a damp cellar, by some oversight, where they were much injured. It is probable that they were finally lost in a disastrous fire.

the Roman Catholic church in the City of New York.”^{32 33} Crèvecoeur then presented a request to the city authorities for permission for the holding of Catholic services in the Exchange, at the foot of Broad Street, but the request was refused. Funds, however, had been collecting, and during the summer (after Crèvecoeur’s departure), Father Charles Whelan, who was in charge of the congregation, bought a lease of five lots owned by the Trinity corporation, at Barclay and Church Streets. Here in a carpenter shop which was fitted up for their use, they continued to worship until the fund, of which Crèvecoeur was one of the trustees, grew to a large enough sum to permit the erection of the church that received the name of St. Peters. The corner-stone of this building was laid in the autumn by the Spanish minister, Don Diego de Gardoqui, and the dedication took place in November of the year following.³⁴

The seventeenth of July, Crèvecoeur wrote to Ethan Allen, “I am arrived here after a very pleasant Passage of twenty-five days.”³⁵ He had expected, as he wrote to General Allen, to go the following day to Paris, but he was not equal to the journey, so he went instead to Caen. “Had my health Permitted me,” he wrote to Jefferson, about a month later,³⁶ “I shou’d long since have enjoyed the Pleasure of Seeing you at Paris — but I feel that I shall not be able to

³² It is surprising to learn that this was done without consulting the ecclesiastical authorities (see W. H. Bennett’s *Catholic Footsteps in the United States*, p. 370).

³³ The act of incorporation may be found in the first volume of records of “religious incorporations”, 1784–1836, where it was recorded “For and at the request of the Hon^e St. John Deerevecor” [sic].

³⁴ November 4, 1786.

³⁵ Robert de Crèvecoeur says that he left New York the latter part of June, and arrived at Lorient July 9th. This is an inadvertence, probably.

³⁶ Aug. 15, 1785, Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 74, no. 3.

Perform that Journey untill the Midle of y^e Fall — I have the Minister's Leave to stay here during that time." Five days later he added, "I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you Some time in Oct.^{re} I shall go, I believe with my two boys to spend some Time with y^e Good Comtesse." ³⁷ Late in September or early in October he made the journey to Paris, where he went first, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,³⁸ to see the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. He spent several days at La Roche Guyon, and then went to Sannois. Here he spent most of October. The Maréchal de Castries, minister of marine, was too ill to see him until the first of November. The first matter to be gone into with the minister was the question of the packets. They had been running very irregularly since June, and no one could tell whether they would be put into active operation again or not, since the expense of running them had proved much larger than the receipts. During the month of November Crèvecoeur spent half the time at Paris and half the time at Sannois. He divided his days between consular and private business, for at this time he set seriously to work at a second edition of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, which was to correct some of the errors that had appeared in 1784, and to contain also, a third volume. Part of these days, too, were spent with his friends, old and new. Among the new acquaintances whom he made at this period were Brissot and Clavière, with whom he was to set on foot the Société Gallo-Américaine, a little later.

In December Mme. d'Houdetôt came back to Paris, and Crèvecoeur's life became very gay — too gay, he says, for a visit to the French opera and to the Italian opera decided him that he was too old and too worn-out for such festivities.

³⁷ Aug. 30, 1785, Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 74, no. 3.

³⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 117.

But throughout the winter months he continued to help Mme. d'Houdetôt receive her friends, to dine with the Duke de la Rochefoucauld and with the Duke de Liancourt and other friends, at the same time that he was at work upon his book, setting the affairs of the packet-service in order, and interviewing the ministry on the subject of the importation of American lumber for ship-building.³⁹ Some time during the winter he was admitted to the Royal Agricultural Society at Paris. In March he addressed a communication to the society on the subject of utensils used for cooking potatoes, and tools used in potato-culture.⁴⁰ A short time afterward he sent another contribution to the society on the subject of the acacia.⁴¹ By April Crèvecoeur was anxious to return to Normandy to see his children. Alexander received from Crèvecoeur, early in April, a box containing portraits of Mme. d'Houdetôt, of Fanny, of Mr. Fellowes, and of his own father. He received a package of books at this time, also, from Mme. d'Houdetôt. A sentence in Crèvecoeur's letter to his son, April third, telling him about the pictures, suggests that Guillaume-Augustin de Crèvecoeur may have come up to Paris for part of the winter, as used to be his custom, and that he may have been the bearer of the packages as far as Mailliot, whence he sent

³⁹ Lafayette was convinced of the wisdom of this measure, and joined his influence to Crèvecoeur's in its behalf. See in this connection, a letter from Jefferson to General Greene, Jan. 12, 1786, Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 396-397. Crèvecoeur wrote to Franklin, July 1st, "the Good Marquis de la Fayette and I, we had conceived strong hopes of seeing him [Philip Dejean] appointed agent for Georgia from whence it was Probable the Minister wou'd draw annually a large quantity of Life oak. but the northern contractors have been successfull, and have destroyed all M. Dejean's expectations."

⁴⁰ See Chapter X for an account of this report.

⁴¹ See Chapter X for an account of the furore which this created in Germany.

his servant with them to Pierrepont.⁴² Not long after, Crèvecoeur, it would seem, must have followed his father, for by the end of April he was hard at work there.⁴³ In the course of the summer he concluded the translation of his book. In October Target wrote to him, "Je ne doute pas que le troisième volume ne me fasse pleurer comme les autres et comme il a déjà commencé de faire chez Mme. d'Houdetot."⁴⁴

Several very kind letters from Mme. d'Houdetôt and St. Lambert, written during this summer to Alexander and Louis, show how warmly attached they both were to Crèvecoeur's sons.⁴⁵ In the autumn when their father took them up to Paris to place them in school, these two friends continued their kindness to his boys, as did Target, who wrote to Crèvecoeur in October in regard to their education.⁴⁶ At Paris, too, they were fortunate enough to win the friendship of Jefferson and his secretary William Short, who showed them much kindness after Crèvecoeur returned to America. For the first few months the boys were in charge of a M. de Longpré, but they were taken later to the school kept by M. Lemoyne, where they remained until their school-days were over. At this school, somewhat famous in its time, they found a nephew of Mme. d'Houdetôt, Frédéric d'Houdetôt, and George Washington Greene, a son of General Nathaniel Greene.

Throughout the whole of this winter of 1786-1787, Crèvecoeur exerted himself in behalf of the extension of commerce between France and the United States. There is no indication that the bureau of information, which he had pro-

⁴² "Mon pere part demain . . . il s'arrete à Malliot d'ou il enverra Poree a Pierrepont. Ce dernier en passant à Caen, vous verra et vous embrassera de ma part." (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 355).

⁴³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 128. ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 359. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

jected in 1784,⁴⁷ actually came into existence, but there are many evidences of his efforts and Lafayette's to place the commerce between the two countries on a sound basis. "The Good Marquis and every well-wisher to America are constantly employed in securing the Trade of your Country every advantage it stands in need of," Crèvecoeur wrote to Governor Bowdoin;⁴⁸ and elsewhere he speaks of Lafayette as the "patron of American commerce." One of the most important steps toward the development of this commerce, both men decided, was the making of Honfleur, at the mouth of the Seine, a free port. The question of its enfranchisement evidently came up in the summer preceding, for Jefferson wrote then to Lafayette, in regard to the visit of a M. Famin, who had urged him to request the government to take this step:

"I told him it was for our interest, as for that also of all the world, that every port of France, and of every other country, should be free . . . but that I could not solicit it, as I had no instructions to do so. . . . I did not add, what I may safely do to you, that the measures proposed being more for the interest of France than of the United States, there is no reason for our desiring its adoption to be placed on the ground of a favor to us . . . If the government, for its own interest, will make the port free, I shall be glad of it; but do not wish it enough to ask for it."⁴⁹

By autumn Jefferson took a somewhat different view of the matter. He wrote then to M. Famin:

"Some late regulations of the King and Council in favor of the commerce of the United States having given us room to hope that our endeavors may be successful to remove a good part of it from Great

⁴⁷ He returns to this subject in a letter to the duke, March 15, 1785, in which he expresses his opinion that French manufactures will not amount to anything until some such step as this is taken.

⁴⁸ July 1, 1786, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XIII: 238.

⁴⁹ June 15, 1786, *Works*, Monticello Edition, V: 346-347.

Britain to France, Honfleur presents itself as a more important instrument for this purpose than it had heretofore appeared. We are, therefore, now pressing earnestly its establishment as a free port.”⁵⁰

In January he wrote to John Jay, secretary for foreign affairs:

“The enfranchising the port of Honfleur at the mouth of the Seine, for multiplying the connections with us, is at present an object . . . Honfleur will be peculiarly advantageous for our rice and whale oil, of which the principal consumption is at Paris. Being free, they can be re-exported when the market here shall happen to be over-stocked.”⁵¹

A few days later he wrote to the Duke d’Harcourt, governor of Normandy, a long letter, setting forth the advantages that would follow this step.⁵² Among the Jefferson papers at Washington there is an unsigned letter written in French, which gives the substance of the above communication. It is written in the thin and pointed hand which is seen in many of Crèvecoeur’s dictated letters, and is the writing, probably, of his secretary. The opening sentence refers to a conversation that had taken place between the duke and his correspondent the day before, in regard to the opening of the port of Honfleur to free trade. The writer says that he has not received instructions from his constituents to make any proposition on the subject, but that he supposes that it would be agreeable to them for the reasons which follow. The probability that Crèvecoeur’s secretary was the scribe who wrote this letter shows that he had been interesting himself in behalf of this measure. It may be hazardous to suggest that Jefferson sent to Crèvecoeur the English draught of his letter to the Duke d’Harcourt; that Crèvecoeur then translated it into French (in which language, from his own admission, Jefferson had

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, V: 462, November 11, 1786.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, VI: 46–47, January 9, 1787.

⁵² *Ibid.*, VI: 52–53, January 14, 1787.

difficulty in expressing himself), and returned both letters to the American minister; that Jefferson, or his secretary, then copied Crèvecoeur's translation and forwarded it to the duke; but it is difficult to see, otherwise, why the French form, in the writing of Crèvecoeur's secretary, was preserved among the Jefferson papers all these years.⁵³ About two weeks after Jefferson's letter to the Duke d'Harcourt, Crèvecoeur wrote to Governor Bowdoin:

"Yesterday we had a great meeting at the Duke of Harcourt's about obtaining the freedom of Honfleur, [at] which Mess^{rs} Barret & Coffin assisted. . . . I have been Encouraged To apply To that Duke, on account of his great kindness for me as well as on that of the Power & Influence he had at Court."⁵⁴

Jefferson wrote to John Jay, shortly after this meeting took place,⁵⁵

" . . . the *enfranchement* of Honfleur . . . is in a fair way of being speedily concluded. The exertions of Monsieur de Crèvecoeur, and particularly his influence with the Duke d'Harcourt, the principal instrument in effecting it, have been of the chief consequence in this matter."⁵⁶

The affair was not "speedily concluded", however, for in April Crèvecoeur was still at work upon it. In that month he drew up a petition to the Duke d'Harcourt, M. de Montmorin and others, which he signed himself and had signed by all the Americans in Paris.⁵⁷ He hoped much from this petition, and left France, the month following, in the expectation that the long-delayed action would soon take

⁵³ In a volume of papers marked "newspapers clippings and miscellany."

⁵⁴ February 3, 1787, *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XIII: 239.

⁵⁵ February 8, 1787, *Works*, Monticello Edition, VI: 85-86.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁵⁷ Short to Jefferson, April 24, 1787, Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 75, no. 20.

place. "He [Crèvecoeur] went from hence in high spirits with respect to the American commerce,"⁵⁸ Short wrote to Jefferson in May, but by mid-summer the matter was still unconcluded. "Honfleur is not yet a free port," Short wrote to him, "since your departure that affair remains in statu quo."⁵⁹ And there it remained, so far as references to it in Crèvecoeur's correspondence are concerned.

There was probably a direct connection between Crèvecoeur's exertions in regard to the opening of the port of Honfleur to American commerce and the founding of a society which he and Clavière and Brissot set on foot this same winter. In 1784 Crèvecoeur had discussed with Lafayette the advisability of establishing at Paris a depository to which the agents of France in the United States should send reports, samples, suggestions of all kinds, which might prove serviceable to French manufacturers, and so to French commerce; for the nature of the exports from France to this country justified the preference that existed in America, at this time, for goods of English make. Lafayette approved of the plan,⁶⁰ and Crèvecoeur referred to it again the following spring in a letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, saying that he did not believe that improvement in French manufactures would come to pass until such a plan was adopted.⁶¹ It may be that the scheme outlined in the following note, written many years later, but referring to this general period of his activity, is a fuller development of this project.

"As I enjoyed the friendship and esteem of the Baron de Breteuil," he wrote, "who was minister of the interior, I tried to get him to induce M. de Vergennes minister to the United States to order all the

⁵⁸ Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 75, no. 20.

⁵⁹ June 21, 1787, Short Papers, Lib. of Cong., vol. II.

⁶⁰ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Dec. 1784; at Mantes.

⁶¹ March 15, 1785; at Mantes.

ministers, ambassadors and diplomatic agents, to send him reports, drawings, and models of machinery, factories, and inventions not known in France, and to have them placed on exhibition, so that the public might see them. This simple and inexpensive plan was not adopted."⁶²

Whether the "bureau de lumières" succeeded or not, some of the objects to which it was to have devoted its attention were made the care of an organization known as the "Société Gallo-Américaine," which began to meet in January 1787. The prospectus of this society was enclosed in a letter to Jefferson from Brissot de Warville, in 1787, referring to the connection of Crèvecoeur and Clavière with the project.⁶³ The object of the society is stated at the outset:

"France, by her arms, has contributed to confirm the independence of free America. A treaty of commerce founded upon the interest of the two countries would unite them more and more closely. The object and principal result of such a commercial bond ought to be the moral and political good of both nations. This cannot be attained unless the two countries are put into position to know each other better, until the individual Frenchman is enabled to know the individual American. Nothing, therefore, is more necessary than to establish a center to which an account of everything of consequence, which is done in either country may be brought. Our society will form this center."

In continuation, the prospectus declares that after such information has been made public, the Société Gallo-Américaine will exert all its influence to cause useful ideas to be adopted. The principal objects, it goes on to say, which are to engage the consideration of the society are commerce between the two countries, their progress in agriculture, in industry of all kinds, in inventions, in legislation, and their achievement in the world of thought generally.

⁶² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 134, translated.

⁶³ Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 2, vol. 84, no. 41.

To gain information on these points they proposed to have sent to them from America, books, reports, newspapers, acts of the legislatures, journals of Congress, etc. Further the society planned to hold correspondence with societies in America which were devoted to useful objects, and to welcome also to its meetings Americans who happened to be in France, who had anything helpful to contribute.

At Harvard University, bound up for some inexplicable reason with other pamphlets in a volume entitled *American Land Companies*, one may read the constitution of the Société Gallo-Américaine. It is composed of twenty-five articles and is concerned, for the most part, with the admission of members, and the conduct of the meetings, which were planned for debate. To summarize these articles briefly, they provided that the society should consist of twelve members living at Paris, of twenty-four living in the provinces, of an equal number in the United States, and an indefinite number abroad. The initiation fees and the annual dues were each to be three louis. Meetings were to take place weekly, at the time and place indicated at each session.⁶⁴ The affairs of the society were to be controlled by a moderator, who was to preside at the meetings, take charge of the debate, sign decisions of the society, etc., and a secretary, who was to take charge of the correspondence, send notices to the members, see to the printing and distribution of the regulations, receive the dues, look after the library and keep the records of the society.

⁶⁴ This prospectus was translated and inserted in the *Newport Herald*, January 1, 1789, under the caption, "Proposals of the Gallo-American Society established at Paris in the year 1787." The quaint English of the translation, and the nature of the object of the society led me to wonder whether Crèvecoeur were not concerned with it, and was the starting-point of my investigation in regard to the organization. The version which appeared in the *Herald* was probably from Crèvecoeur's hand, for he was back in this country at the time of its publication, and it was his constant practice, as has been seen, to translate just such items for the American newspapers.

Each member, in turn, was to be moderator for one month; the secretary was to be elected yearly. It is interesting, in view of the storm which broke over the country so soon after, to note that there is a provision for the "égalité" of all the members. "Il n'y a aura dans l'assemblée aucunes distinctions de places, excepté pour le modérateur & le secrétaire, dont les places seront fixés; les autres se placeront ainsi qu'il leur conviendra, sans égard aux qualités ou conventions reçues dans le monde; tous les membres devant se regarder comme égaux." Each person admitted was expressly recommended to the hospitality of his brother-members, wherever he might find himself. The corresponding members, besides receiving their fellow-members when they were travelling in their vicinity, were to direct to the society at Paris such persons as they thought might prove useful to it, and to report to it everything of interest which took place in their locality and had to do with the objects of the society. This last requirement was to be enforced with rigor. If a French member were to allow six months, or a foreign member a year to elapse without some communication, his name was to be dropped from the roll, unless he produced a satisfactory reason for his silence.

A short time ago a manuscript was bought by the John Carter Brown Library, at Providence, which contained the proceedings of the first three months of the society. At the March meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society Mr. F. B. Sanborn described this document in some detail.⁶⁵ The manuscript, which is preceded by an engraved portrait of Clavière, is written in the fine, large, clerkly hand of a scribe, and seems to be the authentic original records for the first three months. A few sheets

⁶⁵ Mr. Sanborn was kind enough to send me his report, as it was impossible for me to go again to Providence to examine it for myself.

are missing, however, for the month of January. At the meetings, which were held weekly, Crèvecoeur usually presided, or a M. Bergasse, whom Mr. Sanborn describes as "the fourth member" of the society.⁶⁶ The other three members were Brissot, Clavière and Crèvecoeur, of whom Brissot, at the last meeting before Crèvecoeur's departure, said, "To him we chiefly owe the idea and the formation of our Society." Whether, as Mr. Sanborn thinks, these four were "sole members," I do not know. Among the topics discussed at the meetings, to all of which foreigners were allowed to come, were the treaty of commerce between England and France, and John Adams' *Defence of the American Constitution*. Brissot and Clavière submitted for the approval of their fellow-members the sheets of their *Essai de comparaison entre la France et les États-Unis*, and Crèvecoeur's third volume of the *Lettres d'un cultivateur*⁶⁷ probably came up for discussion. The society was about to take up the subject of the emancipation of negro slaves, when Crèvecoeur's departure in April seems to have interrupted their plan. The records of the society run from January second to April third. Whether the club was suspended after that, I do not know, but it seems likely that it was merged with the Society of the Friends of the Blacks,⁶⁸ which Brissot and Clavière formed in the year following,

⁶⁶ Nicolas Bergasse was a lawyer from Lyons. He was not an active member of the society, Mr. Sanborn says, but through him the merchants of Lyons presented a memoir in regard to the extension of commerce between France and the United States. Attention is called to the striking treatise, which Bergasse wrote before the Revolution, on "Animal Magnetism."

⁶⁷ The first copies of the edition of 1787 were distributed at the end of March. The book was put on sale in April.

⁶⁸ The French Society was organized in February 1788 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 381, note 1, and the Dreyfus life of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, p. 64). It was composed of about three hundred members

in emulation of the society founded at London by Granville Sharp, in 1787, for the same purpose.

Early in May Crèvecoeur went to Sannois to spend a few days with Mme. d'Houdetôt. At this time he was made happy by her kind promises of friendship to his two children during his coming absence:

"From this moment until your return," she assured him, "I shall adopt them. I hope that they will love me and look upon me as their mother,⁶⁹ and that they will call me so. Every Thursday I shall take them to dine at Mr. Jefferson's, every Sunday he and your children will dine with me. On occasion I shall take them to the theatre. Their vacations will be spent with me, either at Sannois or at le Marais, or at Méréville."

Jefferson's secretary, William Short, who became chargé d'affaires when Jefferson returned to America later in the year, also promised to exercise some supervision over their welfare. He wrote a little later to a friend in America, explaining that Crèvecoeur had promised to take charge of any letters that might be sent from America to Short, saying, "I am in return to see often his sons who are at school in Paris, and to take charge of their letters for him."⁷⁰ This promise Short kept faithfully.⁷¹ After leaving Sannois, Crèvecoeur went to Normandy and then to Lorient,

(see *N. Y. Journal*, Aug. 14, 1788), among whom were Mirabeau, Lafayette, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Sieyès, Grégoire, Volney, William Short and Crèvecoeur himself. A committee was elected consisting of Grégoire, Mirabeau, la Rochefoucauld, Condorcet and Lafayette, which met at the house of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld (*Memoirs of Lafayette*, by Gen. H. L. V. DuCoudroy, Geneva, N. Y., 1835, 2d edit., p. 94).

⁶⁹ Robert de Crèvecoeur says (p. 136, note 1), that the boys in fact always did call her "maman d'Houdetôt."

⁷⁰ Recollections of Mme. d'Houdetôt, referred to in *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 136.

⁷¹ Aug. 3, 1787, Short Papers, Vol. III, Library of Congress.

according to Robert de Crèvecoeur.⁷² He probably did go to Caen, but the French biographer forgot that the packets for America were sailing at this time from Havre,⁷³ whence Crèvecoeur sailed the second week in June. "Crèvecoeur has gone for Havre," Short wrote on the eighth to Jefferson, "to sail from thence the 10."⁷⁴ He was accompanied by Samuel Breck, Junior, who had come to France under the care of the Marquis de Vaudreuil to pursue his studies, and by the daughter of M. de Beaumanoir (director of the hôtel des invalides), who was going out to America under Crèvecoeur's escort to marry M. de la Forest.⁷⁵

⁷² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 136.

⁷³ Two English packets ran between Havre and Southampton, so this arrangement offered good connection for mail and passengers (see *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 5, 1787).

⁷⁴ Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 2, vol. 75, no. 2.

⁷⁵ M. de la Forest was acting as consul at New York in Crèvecoeur's absence.

CHAPTER X

CRÈVECOEUR AS AN AGRICULTURALIST

THE year after the "American Farmer's" *Letters* appeared in London, Samuel Ayscough, then librarian of the British Museum, devoted, as we have seen, a pamphlet ¹ to an attack upon the author, in which he asserted that Crèvecoeur never was a farmer in America, and that the book was a mere hoax designed to draw emigrants to the new country. By the time Ayscough has finished his pamphlet the unfortunate *Letters* are shown to be a tissue of lies and the author a grovelling impostor. Yet the deed of purchase of Crèvecoeur's farm in Orange County nearly twenty years earlier can be seen today in the office of the county clerk at Goshen, and a year before Ayscough wrote, Crèvecoeur had printed at Caen a treatise on potato-culture which Parmentier and Cadet-de-Vaux did not disdain to recognize. He had been admitted thereupon to the Agricultural Society at Caen, and in August of the year of Ayscough's energetic attack he was given the title of correspondent of the Académie des Sciences at Paris. In this very year, too, in which his credit as an author in general and as a farmer in particular was challenged, Crèvecoeur was beginning his series of papers, chiefly agricultural, which came out in American journals over the pseudonym of "Agricola." If it were not for a

¹ *Remarks on the Letters from an American Farmer; or a detection of the errors of Mr. J. Hector St. John, pointing out the pernicious Tendency of these Letters to Great Britain.* London . . . MDCLXXXIII.

letter to Mme. d'Houdetôt,² fortunately preserved in Robert de Crèvecoeur's account of his ancestor,³ it would be somewhat venturesome to affirm that the "American Farmer" and "Agricola" were the same. This letter, dated in 1789, the only one preserved of those written to the woman who did so much for Crèvecoeur's fortunes, speaks of the writer's having contributed to American gazettes from the year 1783 over this signature,⁴ and of his having introduced into this country the sainfoin, the luzerne, the vêches, the vignon, and the racine de disette. The period from 1783 to 1790 (when many of the Agricola letters were written) covers Crèvecoeur's term of residence as consul in New York. It follows the publication of the book which had made him celebrated as the "American Farmer." It covers his election to a number of societies devoted to the

² New York, March 20, 1789.

³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 380.

⁴ Not all the articles so signed were from Crèvecoeur's pen. In the summer of 1779 the Rev. Percy Stockdale had written several political letters over this pseudonym. (See Cushing: *Pseudonyms and Anonyms*, 1885.) James Anderson, the editor of the "Bee," used it about 1790. In 1804 a pamphlet on the Embargo Act entitled an *Address to the farmers of Pennsylvania* is signed Agricola (Vol. II, Pamphlets belonging to the Gilpin Library at the Penn. Hist. Soc. The date is pencilled). Extensive use was made of the signature. George Washington Jeffrys wrote in 1818 that the essays of Agricola on agricultural subjects, amounting to forty numbers, were shortly to appear in the form of a book. In 1822, in fact, John Young's letters, which appeared in Halifax newspapers over that name, were collected and caused wide-spread interest. (See *Early Agriculture in the Atlantic Provinces*, by Howard Trueman.) Yet while Crèvecoeur can not have been the early Agricola, for at the time Stockdale was writing his political articles Crèvecoeur was in the Provost Prison at New York, and while he was not the Agricola whose letters were collected in 1822, who is identified as John Young, one is safe in saying that he is the author of some at least of the articles so signed in American journals from 1783 to 1790.

development of agriculture, and coincides with the period during which he corresponded with Washington, Jefferson, Governor Bowdoin, Ethan Allen and the vice-consul of Carolina, Chateaufort, on agricultural matters. It was during this period, too, that Crèvecoeur assisted in establishing the botanical gardens at New Haven,⁵ and perhaps also the one at Bergen Neck.⁶ This period also follows by a year the publication of his treatise on the cultivation of the potato. It will be seen, therefore, that Crèvecoeur had some right to the title of "American Farmer" and some claim to the use of the nom-de-plume "Agricola."⁷

The treatise on the potato just referred to, dedicated to the Duke d'Harcourt, then governor of Normandy, is so rare today that few bibliographies include it. It is signed Normanno-Americanus, a name descriptive of Crèvecoeur's Norman birth and American citizenship. Like most of his other work, in appearing under a pen-name it conforms to the fashion of the day which produced the *Letters of Junius*, the *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*, and contributions to the gazettes from Agricola, Publicola, Ruricola, Paddlefoot Gadabout, and Tom Thoughtful. The responsibility for its publication rests partly with the Marquis

⁵ Chapter VII: 111-116.

⁶ See a reference to a letter from Crèvecoeur to the Gov. of New Jersey, dated Nov. 26, 1783, *Votes and Proceedings of the Gen. Ass. of N. J.*, 1781-1786, p. 64. See also an act enabling André Michaux to purchase land in New Jersey for a botanical garden to be furnished at the king's expense, *Acts of the Gen. Ass. of the State of N. J.*, vol. 1783-1788, W. 242-243, under date, March 3, 1786. These are referred to in Chapter VII: 103-106.

⁷ For a reproduction of the article on the subject of the grasses referred to in the letter to Mme. d'Houdetôt, signed by this name, and for a discussion of Crèvecoeur's connection with the whole series of papers by Agricola, see Appendix, pp. 322-344.

Turgot,⁸ a member of the Académie des Sciences, and one of the founders of the Société d'Agriculture. On January 1, 1782, the pamphlet was published at Caen, the author's birthplace. Aside from contributing to establish Crèvecoeur's right to the nom-de-plume he adopted in the American journals, the treatise is of interest in the history of potato-culture. It needed a greater name than Crèvecoeur's, that of Antoine Parmentier, to introduce the potato into France; but, while we admit this, we need not let the greater light completely obscure the lesser. Crèvecoeur's pamphlet preceded Parmentier's of 1784, and in his pamphlet of 1789⁹ Parmentier describes a variety which he says Crèvecoeur sent from New York. He acknowledges also the information that he received from him in regard to methods of cultivation and preparation of the potato, and attributes to him the importation of several new varieties. Crèvecoeur's little volume was not forgotten even by 1812, when Cadet-de-Vaux wrote his *Moyens de prévenir le retour des disettes*.¹⁰ But in spite of its recognition by Parmentier and Cadet-de-Vaux, the pamphlet hardly went beyond the limits of the province,¹¹ and made so little stir that Crèvecoeur, in his efforts to make known some of the really use-

⁸ Etienne François Turgot, marquis de Soumont, was a connection of the Crèvecoeur family and one of the earliest friends Crèvecoeur made upon his return to France in 1781. His admission to the Agricultural Society of Caen, as has been said, was probably due to the influence of Turgot and the Duke d'Harcourt. Turgot, whose aunt had married Crèvecoeur's uncle, took such a strong liking to him that at the close of 1781 he took him to his house at Paris, where he made the acquaintance of the naturalist Buffon, Turgot's intimate friend. A letter to Franklin from Crèvecoeur at the American Philosophical Society (Franklin Papers, XXIV: 158) shows that he was living at the hotel Turgot as late as March 30, 1782.

⁹ *Traité sur la culture et les usages des pommes de terre, de la patate et du topinambour*. Paris, 1789; pp. 42, 73, 109, 110, 121, 131, 314.

¹⁰ See p. 120. ¹¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 295.

ful ideas which he felt it contained, presented part of it anew in a communication to the Agricultural Society at Paris in 1786.¹² The book has apparently never reached this country, and no one of the students of agriculture who have been consulted has ever even heard of it. We must rely, therefore, upon Robert de Crèvecoeur's description, since it was even then (1883) "presque in trouvable."¹³

The full title read, *Aux habitants de la Normandie. Traité de la culture des pommes de terres et des différents usages qu'en font les habitants des États-Unis de l'Amérique*. The epigraph "Si invenire non licuit, imitari non pigeat," is appropriate, for Crèvecoeur, though he kindled no flame, spent his life in passing on the torch. These seventy-two pages, like all that he wrote on practical subjects, are full of curious and interesting details. In them he has relied upon his own experience as a farmer in America and upon information gathered in Ireland, where, it will be remembered, he made a short stay before he reached England on the way to France in 1781. The origin of the plant is discussed briefly, and its introduction into England. He then dwells at length upon the importance it has assumed among the Irish, and advocates its cultivation in Normandy. After explaining fully the use which Americans make of it, and the different ways in which they prepare it for their own use and for that of their stock, he describes the implements used in its cultivation which, a few years later, he discussed before a committee of the Agricultural Society, and enters into minute details about methods of cultivation. In spite of its small size Robert de Crèvecoeur char-

¹² *Memoires . . . de la Société d'Agriculture . . . 1786 . . . pp. 107-115.*

¹³ Since writing the above I have had an opportunity to examine the copy which Count de Crèvecoeur used, but I have nothing to add to his analysis.

acterizes it as a complete manual for popular use — “un manuel complet, un vrai livre de vulgarization.”¹⁴

August of the year following saw Crèvecoeur's election as corresponding member of the Académie des Sciences. The closing months of the year were occupied by his departure for his post at New York and his establishment there. One of his first official communications, his letter to the governor of New Jersey, November 26th, offering in the king's name to assist in the establishment of a botanical garden in that state, has already been referred to. From the beginning of his consulship, so early as January 1784, there are references in Crèvecoeur's letters to agricultural and botanical matters. He writes to Jefferson, January 23rd,¹⁵ inquiring about the method of distilling brandy from potatoes which he has heard of as a practice in some of the remotest settlements of the South; and in July he writes again in regard to some seeds which Jefferson had promised to have gathered for him.¹⁶ Later in the same year (Sept. 1st),¹⁷ he reminds Jefferson again of his promise.

In June, 1785,¹⁸ as has been said, Crèvecoeur returned to France for a period of two years. Shortly before he left, he wrote again to Jefferson in regard to some seeds which were to have been sent to him from a merchant in Richmond. In the same letter he speaks of having received from his friend the vice-consul of Carolina (Chateaufort) seeds of two varieties of magnolia.¹⁹ He has hardly landed at Lorient

¹⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 295.

¹⁵ Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 1, Library of Congress.

¹⁶ Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 7, Library of Congress.

¹⁷ Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 4, Library of Congress.

¹⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 115.

¹⁹ May 18. See Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 5, Library of Congress.

before we find him writing to Ethan Allen: "In the seed way also, Dear Sir, I would most earnestly thank you for the seed of any Grass, Bush, Plant or Tree which you may think valuable, prove usefull and curious." The reason for this request is made plain by Allen's reply in March of the following year: "As to any shrubs or varieties to accomodate the King's Garden, we have it in contemplation, and will write you on that as well as other particulars more fully at another time."²⁰

At what date Agricola was admitted to the Royal Agricultural Society at Paris, Robert de Crèvecoeur²¹ does not say, but he surmises that it was in 1786, before March, when his name appears for the first time in the reports of the society.²² Crèvecoeur planned to present a communication on the subject of some of the implements and utensils which he had described in his treatise of 1782. But the committee, consisting of Cadet-de-Vaux, the Duke de Liancourt and Crèvecoeur himself, decided to confine themselves to the "marmite américaine,"²³ designed for "la cuisson a la vapeur." They were somewhat embarrassed at the outset by the fact that this was Parmentier's province. Crèvecoeur had the fortunate idea, however, of submitting their report on the "marmite" to him. Parmentier then remembered that he had long before counselled the use of steam in cooking tubers, and suggested several modifications of the plan. These were adopted, and the committee was able to report that the American utensil presented to their consideration embodied the application of the principles of M. Parmentier, thus establishing his

²⁰ *Vermont, Governor and Council*, III: 390, March 2, 1786.

²¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 124.

²² *Memoires de la Société d'Agriculture*, 1786. *Trimestre de printemps*, 107-115.

²³ A kind of double boiler.

right of discovery. It is gratifying to learn that Parmentier appreciated this consideration, and three years later acknowledged his indebtedness to Crèvecoeur on several scores in his *Traité sur la culture des pommes de terre*.²⁴

During the same month (March 30, 1786) Crèvecoeur read before this society a report on the American acacia,²⁵ the method of its cultivation and the uses made of it in the new country. This created no more stir at the time than his pamphlet on potato-culture had four years earlier. "What impression did M. Crèvecoeur's excellent treatise of 1786 make upon the nation? None, so far as I know," wrote a correspondent from Mannheim²⁷ in 1804 to François Neufchâteau.²⁸ It was translated into German, however, and inserted in a journal devoted to the acacia²⁹ by Friederich Medicus. The writer describes it as a conscientious study, full of technical details, little remarked in France, but very successful in Germany, where it contributed largely toward enthusiasm for the cultivation of

²⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 126.

²⁵ The false acacia (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*), named for the naturalist Jean Robin, who brought it to France from America during the reign of Henry IV., is not unlike the locust, but the blossoms have a different odor and the branches are covered with thorns. Crèvecoeur mentions among other uses, its value as a hedge. The "American acacia" is often found disguised under the name of "locust."

²⁶ *Mem. sur la culture et les usages du faux acacia (Robinia pseudo-acacia) dans les E. U., par M. Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, présenté à la séance publique du mars, 1786, trimestre d'hiver, 1786*, pp. 122-143.

²⁷ F. C. Medicus, see below.

²⁸ Minister of the Interior, mayor of Paris.

²⁹ The fact of the existence of a "zeitschrift" devoted to the subject of the cultivation of the acacia, from 1794-1803, in five volumes, shows to what length the rage for the acacia went in Germany. It is almost comparable to the worship of the tulip in Holland. For information about this editor and his connection with acacia-literature, see G. A. Pritzel's *Thesaurus Literaturae Botanicae*, Leipzig, 1851, pp. 187-188.

the acacia. Not long after the Revolution (1803), it was reproduced by Neufchâteau in his *Lettre sur la Robinier*,³⁰ published at Paris. In this he speaks of Crèvecoeur's pamphlet with warrantable enthusiasm:

"M. Saint Jean de Crève-Coeur . . . écrit avec une chaleur persuasive. Ses lettres américaines avaient même été un moment contagieuses. . . . On retrouve dans ce mémoire . . . le même ton d'enthousiasme et la même éloquence; mais ici elle est si bien appliqué, que ses efforts ne peuvent être que fort utile."

The little treatise has an interest quite aside from its concern with the acacia, in the picture it presents of country-life in America at this time and earlier. As such it may be considered as a pendant to the second of the Farmer's Letters, "On the Situation Feelings and Pleasures of an American Farmer."

In April Crèvecoeur sent instructions to the Duchess de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, which make it clear that she was experimenting with the acacia and with the new variety of potato that Crèvecoeur had named "le maréchal de Castries."³¹ In July he wrote to Governor Bowdoin of Massachusetts:

"Will your Excellency be pleased to remember the different Seeds of artificial Grasses I sent you some Time before I left New York. I hope they have fructified, that their use is now better known. They most certainly are of y^e Greatest Importance in Husbandry. I have desired M^r Déjean to examine those fields here which are covered with them, that after having been an Ocular Witness of the vast quantities of Fodder they bring forth, he may more particularly explain it to your Excellency. I have desired him to deliver you a small quantity of the same seeds, that in case of any accident these useful Tryals may be renewed. . . . I beg your Excellency Wou'd receive them as a Token of my Earnest desire of Introducing that Important Branch of Rural Improvement into the State of Massachusetts.

³⁰ *Lettre au citoyen François Neufchâteau . . . sur la Robinier traduit de l'Allemand . . . 1805 . . . 36 pp.*

³¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 356.

I refer your Excellency to the Imperfect Instructions I have printed in the New York Gazette, a copy of which I sent together with the first Envoy of Seeds.”³²

The following year, 1787, the year of Crèvecoeur’s return to his post at New York, James Bowdoin, Junior, wrote to William Irving, recording secretary of the committee upon agriculture of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, that the late governor had received from France recently a number of publications from Mr. St. Jean de Crèvecoeur on the subject of some agricultural experiments. He sent a translation of several of them to be laid before the committee, and, in case they thought it advisable, to be communicated to the public.³³ The “Instructions on the culture and use of maize, or Indian corn as fodder”³⁴ were reprinted five times in less than half a year.³⁵ They occupy a column in Bowdoin’s translation.

Papers signed by Agricola continued to appear in American periodicals throughout 1787 and 1788, some of which are in all probability to be attributed to Crèvecoeur, but in 1789 Agricola is nearly silent.³⁶ Crèvecoeur’s recognition by Parmentier, however, as one of the pioneers of potato-culture, dates from this year when he is cited in Parmentier’s “Traité”³⁷ as one of those who have been benefactors of their canton. Of specimens sent by Crève-

³² *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XIII: 237-238.

³³ *Massachusetts Centinel*, July 6, 1787. Letter is dated June 27th.

³⁴ “Instructions sur la culture et l’usage de maïs, ou blé de turquie en fourrage.”

³⁵ *Independent Chronicle*, July 12th; *Independent Gazetteer*, July, 18th; *United States Chronicle*, July 19th; *Newport Herald*, July 26th; *Worcester Magazine*, July, 3rd week. See, too, *American Museum*, November, 1787.

³⁶ See Appendix, “Agricola,” pp. 322-344.

³⁷ *Traité sur la culture des pommes de terre etc.*, 1789, p. 72. See above, p. 168, note 24.

coeur from New York and Long Island he speaks on page 121; of tools and implements described by him there are notices here and there; and a variety of the potato introduced by him is described on page 42.

It is probable that Crèvecoeur's last words as Agricola were spoken in 1790,³⁸ the year of his return to France. During the ten years that followed, a number of papers signed by Agricola appeared in American gazettes and magazines, but they are chiefly devoted to politics, or of such a nature as to make it seem unlikely that Crèvecoeur was concerned in their authorship.³⁹ A review of them leads one to believe that there was another Agricola, perhaps more than one, who is responsible for the remaining papers so signed, up to the time when John Young's famous *Letters from Agricola*⁴⁰ appeared.

In 1796 Crèvecoeur was elected to the Institute,⁴¹ the name under which the old French Academy was reorganized. In the same year, too, he became again a farmer. He was at that time at his old home at Caen, caring for his aged father, but superintending from that distance the labors of his son-in-law, Count Otto, with whom he had purchased a small place at Lesches, near Meaux.⁴² To this place he went early in 1800. He was received into the Société d'agriculture, sciences, et arts de Meaux in the following year, not long after the Société d'agriculture de Caen had paid him the same honor.⁴³

³⁸ See discussion of a paper on sowing flax, Appendix, "Agricola," pp. 342-343.

³⁹ See Appendix "Agricola," pp. 335, 338 for discussion of the political papers signed by this name.

⁴⁰ They began to appear in the newspapers in 1818, and came out in book form in 1822.

⁴¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 209. ⁴² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 225.

⁴³ M. Otto was sent to Munich as minister-plenipotentiary after his return from London, following the Treaty of Amiens which was brought to a conclusion through his efforts. — *Biographie Générale*.

When Crèvecoeur followed his son-in-law to Munich in 1806, his interest in matters relating to agriculture and horticulture did not cease. He had the satisfaction while there of finding a variety of potato imported by him in 1786, the "maréchal de Castries."⁴⁴ At this time, too, he experimented with making potato-bread according to Parmentier's formula. Among Crèvecoeur's unpublished writings is a report on the method of Munich gardeners to obtain vegetable mould.⁴⁵ He attempted on his part to introduce there a method of training fruit-trees which Cadet-de-Vaux had demonstrated, and wrote an article on the subject, which was published many years after in the *Revue Horticole* for 1882,⁴⁶ by the great-grandson who afterwards became his biographer.

A fragment of a letter to his daughter-in-law, written from Munich, February, 1807,⁴⁷ shows with what pleasure Crèvecoeur continued to look back upon his former experiences as an American farmer, even during these years at the Bavarian capital:

"Yesterday was Fanny's⁴⁸ birthday, every one brought his gifts. I had designed and framed a sasasfras-tree with its vine, and beneath the words 'sweet and pleasant is the memory of farmer's days. Planted the 3rd. April 1773.'" ⁴⁹

Five years later Crèvecoeur's death took place at Sarcelles, the much loved home of the family at Lesches. It was appropriate that his last days should have been passed amid the enjoyments of the quiet country life he loved so well, and on the estate whose cultivation he had directed with so much enthusiasm.

⁴⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 249, note 2. ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 250. ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 408. ⁴⁸ His daughter, Mme. Otto.

⁴⁹ The story of the circumstance which this commemorates may be found in the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, ed. 1784, I: 224. See also Chapter IV, "Greycourt and Pine Hill," p. 34.

Enough has perhaps been said to justify Crèvecoeur's right to the title which Ayscough had disputed in his attack of 1783. The attack was prompted, no doubt, by patriotism, for at that time the number of emigrants from the British Isles was becoming something of a serious menace,⁵⁰ and Ayscough probably felt that he was discharging a duty in attempting to check the dangerous popularity of Crèvecoeur's too-alluring description of life in the new country. But his strictures were based partly upon misunderstanding; this may serve to establish Ayscough's sincerity, while at the same time it leaves Crèvecoeur freed from some of the charges brought against him. Ayscough's idea of a "farmer" was confined to the understanding of that word in England, where the farmer's position was altogether different from that in America. Thomas Cooper pointed this out in 1794 in *Some Information respecting America, etc.*:⁵¹ "With you it [the term farmer] means a tenant, holding of some lord, paying much in rent, and much in tythes, and much in taxes: an inferior rank in life, occupied by persons of inferior manners and education. In America a farmer is a land-owner, paying no rent, no tythes, and few taxes, equal in rank to any other rank in the state, having a voice in the appointment of his legislators, and a fair chance, if he deserve it, of becoming one himself. In fact, nine-tenths of the legislators of America are farmers."

With the right to the name of "American Farmer" we may also concede Crèvecoeur's right to the title of "Agricola." Out of the forty-three articles so signed that appeared

⁵⁰ See the *English Review* for March, 1783, p. 272. "The emigrations which have been so often foretold, have begun to take place, both in Great Britain and Ireland, and add to the gloom which hangs over this falling empire."

⁵¹ Dublin, 1794, pp. 72-73.

from 1782 to 1817, which are examined in the article on this subject in the Appendix,⁵² Crèvecoeur was certainly the author of two, in all probability the author of six others, and with great likelihood concerned in fourteen more. These Agricola papers are no very dazzling addition to Crèvecoeur's fame as a writer or as a farmer, but they are interesting to the student of his career because they are characteristic throughout of his genius — of his gifts and of his limitations. In these papers and in his systematic patronage of inventions and discoveries of all kinds, Crèvecoeur showed quick and practical appreciation of useful ideas wherever he found them, although his claim as an inventor or first discoverer is small. In the interchange of practical ideas between the old world and the new he served his day with great usefulness. The title of a communication which he sent to the Maréchal de Castries, now to be found in the Library at Mantes, characterizes his efforts in behalf of agriculture and all the other activities of his day of which he had any understanding. It covers twenty-eight octavo pages and is entitled: "Idées que je crois utiles et que pour cette raison je prens la liberté de communiquer à Monsieur le maréchal de Castries."

⁵² Pages 322-344.

CHAPTER XI

THE PACKET SERVICE

THE story of the packet service between France and the United States during the ten years which followed the American Revolution has been briefly told by Robert de Crèvecoeur in the biography of his great-grandfather, which appeared at Paris in 1883.¹ M. de Crèvecoeur there presented in seven pages the substance of the most important documents relating to the subject to be found in the Archives de la Marine at Paris, in the Archives des Affaires Étrangères and among the Correspondence Diplomatique, as well as among the papers which remained in his family from the ancestor whose activity led to the institution of the service and whose persistence afforded its main support. This account has been so little read in this country, however, that it is ignored even by such an authority as Mr. John Austin Stevens in the chapter recently devoted to the commerce of those early days in the *Memorial History of the City of New York*,² and in his *Colonial Records of the New York Chamber of Commerce*, where the notice of William Seton's connection with the service as deputy-agent under the consul would have afforded an opportunity for a reference, at least, to this account of the enterprise.³ It has seemed worth while, therefore, to retell the history

¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*.

² J. G. Wilson, ed. Vol. IV, pp. 541-542.

³ That it was unknown to Mr. Stevens seems probable from the fact that his list of the vessels devoted to the service agrees with the announcement published in the newspapers of the time, but is at variance with the list given by Robert de Crèvecoeur of the ships which actually sailed.

of the packet service, since the account to which we refer has remained unnoticed by many readers, and since an examination of the newspapers published in New York during the ten years under discussion, supplemented by occasional files of those printed elsewhere, together with letters published and unpublished from Crèvecoeur, Jefferson, Franklin and William Short, has brought to new light details in regard to the service, and has made it possible to form an approximate idea of its scope and efficiency.

The idea of a mail-service between France and the United States had been contemplated before Crèvecoeur made his suggestion to the Minister of Marine early in 1783, in regard to the establishment of the packet-boats. *The Naval Records of the American Revolution* include a recommendation early in 1780⁴ for the establishment of a packet service between the two countries.⁵ It is not surprising to find Franklin's name in connection with this plan.⁶ But the project did not succeed, as we learn from a letter written by Franklin to James Lovell.⁷ Later in 1780⁸ the Board of Admiralty of the Continental Congress announced to

⁴ January 28, 1780.

⁵ Page 133.

“(a) 3 packet-boats to be established,

· (b) mail to be made up the day of sailing,

(c) boats to sail from America and France in June, August and every second month,

(d) service to be under the Board of Admiralty.”

⁶ See *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* (Wharton), II: 301-302, for an “Agreement between M. Ray de Chaumont on the one part, and Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane, on the other,” among the manuscripts in the Department of State.

⁷ *Ibid.*, III: 200. “Our scheme here for packet boats did not continue. I wish Congress could fall on some method of sending some little light vessels once a month to keep up a correspondence more regular.”

⁸ April, 1780.

the Navy Board at Boston that the use of the government packets to carry private freight was disapproved. Whether a government service had actually been inaugurated, if so, how long it continued, or whether this plan coincided with the scheme of Franklin, Deane, and Ray de Chaumont referred to above, these records do not indicate. It can be seen, however, that the first recommendation offered little toward the development of commerce between the two countries, because of infrequent sailings, and that the second with its restrictions upon the carrying of freight did not promise much more usefulness in this regard. The development of commerce, nevertheless, was exactly what was desired at the close of our war with England, and the proposition which Crèvecoeur made to the Minister of Marine emphasized the need for this development, and made provision for it by facilitating communication between the United States and France. How this suggestion came to be offered is told by his biographer.⁹

When the commissioners from England and America met at Paris in 1783, Crèvecoeur, as a naturalized citizen of America and a resident there for many years, was solicited for details about the topography, industries, etc., of the country. He went at once to Versailles, and aided by two secretaries, spent seven weeks in preparing an exhaustive report upon conditions in the colonies.¹⁰ This opportunity was procured through the efforts of Crèvecoeur's friend and patroness, the Countess d'Houdetôt, who enlisted the influence of her friends in his behalf. His report, supplemented by excellent maps, which, we learn, especially pleased the king, led to Crèvecoeur's being appointed

⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 76-79.

¹⁰ This is not now to be found, but Robert de Crèvecoeur cites a request for a pension at the Archives des Affaires Étrangères, presented by Crèvecoeur in March 1793, in which reference is made to the elaborate work drawn up ten years before (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 79, note 1).

consul to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. As the writer of this detailed review of conditions in the American colonies, as the author, too, of a popular book upon American life which had recently been published in London,¹¹ Crèvecoeur was in a position to be listened to when his nomination to the consulship occurred.¹² He made use of the opportunity afforded by his frequent interviews with the Maréchal de Castries, then Minister of Marine, to urge the creation of regular communication between France and the United States, for the only way open for mail or passage after the failure of the plan of 1780, besides the slow and uncertain merchant-ships, was by means of the English packets which sailed from Falmouth to New York.¹³ Not content with suggestion alone, Crève-

¹¹ *Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.

¹² Signed June 22, 1783.

¹³ The English packet service began in 1756 with ships plying between New York and Falmouth (*Watson's Annals*, p. 190). They continued to run during the years of the American Revolution, although interrupted at times. See Hugh Gaine's *Journal*, ed. P. L. Ford, 1902, II: 21: "This day March 9, 1777 the Packet, Capt. Bolderson, came up from Falmouth in 7 weeks, which is the first intelligence that arrived here from authority, since Oct. 21, 1776, from England." From a letter to Crèvecoeur from Franklin in 1783 we learn that Franklin had had a share in the management of this service. (Bigelow's *Franklin*, IX: 4, gives 1784 as the conjectural date of this letter, but it should probably be assigned to the earlier year.) These ships continued to run throughout the ten years when the French packets were in operation, i.e. from 1783 to 1793, and later, but no satisfactory account of the English packets before the founding of the famous "Black Ball Line" in 1816, and the "Red Star" and "Swallow Tail" lines which followed, has yet appeared. The earlier English ships were slower-going than the French ones; six weeks were generally required for the passage, the time was often much longer — seven, nine and once even fifteen weeks. "This morning (March 10, 1777) the Mercury packet . . . came in from Falmouth, after a tedious voyage of 15 weeks, having sailed 8 weeks before Capt. Bolderson that arrived yesterday, and was at Sea all the Time." (*Journal of Hugh Gaine*, II: 21.)

coeur submitted a plan which the Minister approved, providing for six ships not to cost the government more than 300,000 livres a year. This plan was adopted, although somewhat modified by the founders of the service. The increased expense entailed by their elaboration of his original plan was an often expressed source of regret to Crèvecoeur,¹⁴ leading as it did twice to the suspension of the service.¹⁵

An undated letter of 1783, at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, from Crèvecoeur to Franklin, written the day after the Minister had shown him a "model of y^e edict which he proposes to obtain for the establishment of the five packet-boats," is of interest because it shows the importance which was attached to Franklin's opinion of the project. It was not strange that he should have been consulted, for, aside from his general practical knowledge, he had had a share in the management of the packet-boats between England and America,¹³ as we learn from his reply, in addition to having contemplated a service between France and the United States.¹⁶ Crèvecoeur writes:

"I desired him to send it [the model] to you, ere he had presented it, which he will shortly do. I beg you'd Treat it attentively and send back all your observations thereon."

The reply was delayed until the Countess d'Houdetôt wrote on Crèvecoeur's behalf, April 2, 1783:¹⁷

"Monsieur de Crevecoeur est fort en peine, Mon Cher Docteur, D'une Réponse qu'il attend de Vous au sujet De l'affaire dont il vous a parlé. . . ." She writes, "sentant tres Bien L'embaras ou Le Deffaut

¹⁴ Hippeau, *Gouvernement de la Normandie*, III:152.

¹⁵ In 1785 and in 1788.

¹⁶ Bigelow's *Franklin*, IX: 4-6.

¹⁷ Owned by the American Philosophical Society. Dated in pencil by a late hand.

De Reponse le Mettrait avec Monsieur de Castries avec qui il a Rendez-vous Vendredy tant pour cette affaire que pour D'autres qui luy sont particuliers."

The long delayed letter came at last, full of practical suggestions and encouragement; it is the only one of the series that has been published:¹⁸

" . . . the project is good," Franklin wrote, "and if carried into execution will certainly be very useful to merchants immediately, and profitable to the revenue of the post-office at least after some time, because not only commerce increases correspondence, but facility of correspondence increases commerce, and they go on mutually augmenting each other."

As the British packets were scheduled to leave Falmouth on the first Wednesday of every month, Franklin suggested that the French packets leave "in the intermediate times, i. e. on the third Wednesdays," an arrangement which would conduce to the convenience of both countries. In his letter he enclosed a chart of the Gulf Stream "little known by European navigators, and yet of great consequence, since in going to America they often get into that stream and unknowingly stem it, whereby the ship is much retarded and the voyage lengthened enormously." The most striking suggestion he made was one that contains the first intimation, according to Mr. Bigelow,¹⁹ of the compartment system, now universal in the construction of ocean-steamers:

"As these vessels are not to be laden with goods, their holds may, without inconvenience, be divided into separate apartments, after the Chinese manner, and each of those apartments caulked tight so as to keep out water . . . so that the ship would not be so subject as others

¹⁸ It appears in Bigelow's *Franklin*, IX: 4-6, with the conjectural date "c. 1784." It seems, however, as if it ought to be dated before the Arrêt du Conseil of June, 1783, which formally announced the opening of the packet service.

¹⁹ Vol. IX, p. 6, note 1.

to founder and sink at sea. This being known would be a great encouragement to passengers." ²⁰

The newly-formed packet service was placed under the direction of the Lecoulteux, bankers at Paris, who were concerned in most of the financial enterprises of the time.²¹ The Arrêt du Conseil of June 28, 1783,²² which announced the opening of the service, provided in Article IV. for their appointment to direct the expedition of the packets, according to the order of the secretary of state in the marine department. "The said Sieurs le Coulteux shall pay all expenses of the said expedition, and receive the money to be paid for the transport of letters, passengers, and of those goods which are to be taken on board." We learn later that the expense to the government yearly was 120,000 livres.²³ This probably is the cost per vessel, because Crèvecoeur, in a letter to the Duke of Harcourt referred to in a former note,²⁴ laments that his more economical plan, which was to cost the government only 300,000 livres annually, was not followed. Robert de Crèvecoeur offers the poverty of the royal treasury in explanation of this peculiar arrangement which led to the appointment of bankers to direct a public service, not at their own risk, but simply as money-lenders and collectors of dues.²⁵ After the service had been in operation

²⁰ Whether this was done or not, I do not know. It is stated in the *New York Gazette and Universal Advertiser*, December 10, 1783, that the ships used in the service were copper-bottomed, as a special precaution for their safety. It is not likely that the entire hold was sacrificed, at any rate, as the vessels carried a limited amount of freight.

²¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 311, note.

²² Quoted in part by Robert de Crèvecoeur, translated in full by the *Pennsylvania Packet* of December 10, 1783.

²³ *New York Journal*, October 23, 1788.

²⁴ Page 179, note 14.

²⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 311.

about five years, Brissot de Warville expressed vigorously the general dissatisfaction that was felt at having it directed by bankers who were too far from the port to see or reform abuses, and who had not the least interest in it.²⁶

The newly-appointed consul was charged by the bankers with the direction of the packets at New York.²⁷ A New York paper of October 6, 1783, announces that "Hector St. John Esq. of Goshen in Orange County, is appointed to reside in this city as Consul to His Most Christian Majesty; and also to superintend the five French packets, the whole profits of which and a salary of 24,000 livres a year, are settled on this gentleman."²⁸ It is unlikely, however, that Crèvecoeur received from the Messrs. Le-coulteux any pecuniary return for his services as their director at this port, for he wrote to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 15, 1784: "As an agent of these 5 vessels I receive no kind of gratification, although it gives me much trouble. I can't therefore be suspected to act in consequence of pecuniary emoluments. I am guided by the only motive of publick good."²⁹ Less than a month after the arrival of the new consul, a New York paper announced William Seton as deputy-agent at 215 Water Street.³⁰ But from May of the following year (1784) until January 26, 1785, all the notices in regard to the packets which are signed bear the name of St. John. After that date they are unsigned until the end of June, when Crèvecoeur received permission to return to France. During his absence it is not impossible that M. de la Forest³¹ directed affairs

²⁶ *Voyage aux États-Unis*, II: 72.

²⁷ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Minister, Sept. 16, 1783, at Arch. de la Marine, Paquebots. Quoted by Robert de Crèvecoeur, p. 312.

²⁸ *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*.

²⁹ In the Library at Mantes.

³⁰ *Rivington's New York Gazette and Universal Advertiser*, December 10, 1783.

³¹ Formerly consul at Georgia.

at New York, in his capacity as vice-consul. According to Robert de Crèvecoeur,³² St. John was director of the service until 1786 only, but a notice in the *New York Packet* for September 25, 1787, suggests that after his return to America in that year he still controlled the service to some extent. After May, 1789, no packets arrived until June of the following year. There is no evidence of Crèvecoeur's connection with the service when it was resumed in that year, 1790. M. Chevallie appears as "Director of the Maritime Post" in the *Daily Advertiser*, June 19, 1789, where those who have letters to be franked are directed to his office at 124 Golden Hill Street, and those desiring freight or passage, to Seaman and Franklin, at 50 Queen Street, or to the captain on board at Moore's wharf. In August, 1790, M. Chevallie is still directing the mail for France. He inserts a long notice in the *Daily Advertiser*³³ in regard to the new packet regulations. Persons wishing freight or passage are directed to apply to the captain on board at Moore's wharf, or to Aaron Vail at 156 Water Street in July, 1791,³⁴ while the mail is still made up at the office of M. Chevallie. The last that is heard of the "director of the maritime post" is during this month, when he announces that applications for freight or passage are to be made to the captain, or to Lewis Moore at 156 Water Street.³⁵ By January, 1793,³⁶ the mail is made up at the post-office, and applications for freight or passage are made to the captain or to Desdoity and Company,³⁷ No. 35

³² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 100.

³³ August 24, 1790. ³⁴ *The Mail* (Phila.), July 5, 1791.

³⁵ *The Mail*, before July 23, 1791.

³⁶ The last packet to leave New York harbor that I find noted is the *General Washington*, which cleared February 3, 1793, or February 4th (*Daily Advertiser*, February 4, 1793).

³⁷ Seaman and Franklin, Aaron Vail, and Desdoity and Company, who were empowered to receive applications for freight or passage after

Water Street. The service probably came to an end in the following month.³⁸

Brissot de Warville's protest³⁹ against the management of the packets by the house of Lecoulteux, against the wasteful extravagance and inattention to just complaints which their absence from the scene of departure involved, was a reasonable one. It may be that they must also be charged with discriminating in the matter of freight shipments in favor of certain consigners, thus making the packets serve the interests of a monopoly rather than those of the general public.⁴⁰ The disruption in 1788 was the result of at least some of these causes. For the service which had begun so well began to languish in 1785. There was talk then of sending a packet every six weeks only.⁴¹ Crèvecoeur, however, wrote in April of that year to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld⁴² that he felt confident that if he could see the Minister of Marine a good many changes in the service could be brought to pass. "For at present," he adds, "no one troubles about it and the excellent minister has many other things to attend to." Jefferson, consequently, expressed a hope in writing to Monroe a few months later that when St. John arrived at Paris he would

the reorganization of the service in 1789, were New York merchants whose advertisements may be found in the papers of the period, in several instances relating to the disposal of wares which have just come over by the packets.

³⁸ *Daily Advertiser*, January 9, 1793.

³⁹ *Voyage aux États-Unis*, II: 72.

⁴⁰ *The Courrier de Boston*, July 9, 1789, commenting on the shortcomings of the former administration, makes a suggestion in regard to freight regulations, which it maintains "would guard against the deadly favors granted to particular enterprises protected by the directors who could make the packets serve a monopoly rather than develop commerce. . . ."

⁴¹ See Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 233.

⁴² In the Library at Mantes.

see them replaced on their monthly system.⁴³ But in August Crèvecoeur wrote despairingly:

“the derangem^t of y^e Packets has discouraged me quite — I never was so surprised as when I was informed of it at L’orient — I cannot flatter myself with the hopes of seeing them reestablished up to their former Number — some Evil Genius has from the beginning secretly opposed & destroyed the simple & useful Ideas I had given on that subject — & I do give it up.”⁴⁴

He did not give it up, however, for about two months later he wrote: “nous travaillions à l’amélioration des paquebots qui, je crois viendront à Havre.”⁴⁵ Proposals were indeed made by Lecoulteux and an American gentleman to have the packets run from Havre to Boston.⁴⁶ The *Maréchal de Castries*, which Crèvecoeur had succeeded in having the French government order from the famous ship-builder, John Peck, of Boston, arrived at that port in June, 1786,⁴⁷ but according to the gazettes, it was the only one that did. Eight packets a year, as against the original monthly schedule, were provided for by the regulations of 1786. Eight arrivals, in fact, are noted in New York papers for 1787,⁴⁸ and four in 1788, ending with the March packet, which arrived the 26th of May. This marks the cessation of

⁴³ Jefferson wrote a month later to the president of Congress to say that he would be happy to hear that Congress thought of establishing packets of their own between New York and Havre, a packet to leave each port once in two months. A schedule for their sailing is added (Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 251-252).

⁴⁴ Jefferson papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 2, Library of Congress.

⁴⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 118, November 15, 1785.

⁴⁶ See a letter from William Short to Crèvecoeur, May 29, 1786, cited in a thesis on William Short by T. W. Morrissey, in the library of Cornell University.

⁴⁷ *New York Packet*, June 22, 1786.

⁴⁸ See the regulations for the packets of December 14, 1786, in the *Independent Gazetteer*, April 18, 1787.

the service for more than a year. The economy which led to its being given up seems ill-judged, for while, as Brissot observes,⁴⁹ there were from seven to eight hundred merchant-vessels sailing between France and her colonies, the vessels sailing between France and America were so infrequent that the abandoning of the packet service, beside lessening the ease of communication between the two countries, meant forcing American commerce into the hands of the English, who already were sending both packets and merchantmen to their former colonies. A year of great inconvenience followed for those who had come to depend upon the packets. Several propositions were made for their reëstablishment; M. de la Forest advised treating with a company which engaged to maintain six packets running from France to Norfolk in Virginia, by way of New York. An American by the name of Parker and a M. Ruker of Bordeaux made other propositions to the government, which had decided that the matter was to be placed in the hands of a contractor.⁵⁰ At length an agreement was made with a ship-owner of Saint Malo, Claude Dubois, by which he was to make six voyages a year from Bordeaux to Norfolk, by way of New York, for 36,000 livres. But his ships were so small and uncertain, and so long at sea, that Jefferson wrote to Crèvecoeur in May, 1789, that he was sending his letter by way of London, as he never dreamed of sending news by the circumnavigation of the Bordeaux packet,⁵¹ and even the French minister at New York declined to trust his despatches by this route. The New York papers do not mention their going to Norfolk, so that part of the plan was probably given up in view of the time it would add to the length of each voyage. The highest tribute that the new service seems to have

⁴⁹ *Voyage aux États-Unis*, II:72. ⁵⁰ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 317.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

received is that which the French minister, the Count de Moustier, paid in a letter to Jefferson: "The new establishment seems to me badly conceived, but it is better to have this than none at all."⁵²

A number of vessels were added to the service in 1790,⁵³ but, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,⁵⁴ the voyages did not become more regular nor less long. At the end of 1792,⁵⁵ the Minister of Marine presented a memoir to the President of the Convention asking to have the service brought within his department, and proposing to have eight ships instead of six, leaving alternately every month from Lorient and Havre, in time of peace; in time of war from Lorient alone. M. de Crèvecoeur concludes his account by saying that he does not know whether this was carried out.^{56 57} After February, 1793, when the *Suffrein* and the *Washington* returned to France,⁵⁸ no references to the service have been observed in the gazettes. Late in 1793—December—Crèvecoeur is heard from again in this connection, but his voice is discreetly muffled; "I have not given my project concerning the P. B. fearing to make myself observed and preferring to remain in obscurity,"⁵⁹ a wise precaution if we remember that he was a member of the nobility, that he was in France, and that the time was "93."

The first official announcement of the opening of the packet service reported that their ships were to run between

⁵² Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 56, Library of Congress.

⁵³ See also an interesting article in the *Courrier de Boston*, July 9 1789, on the packets.

⁵⁴ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 317.

⁵⁵ December 2, 1792.

⁵⁶ This was done. See *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 182, note 3.

⁵⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 317.

⁵⁸ *Daily Advertiser*, January 9, 12, 31, 1793.

⁵⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 182.

Port Louis and New York.⁶⁰ But the port of departure was changed to Lorient, near Brest, and the first packets left from that place, as did all those that followed, so far as their arrivals are noted in the newspapers, until February, 1786, when Havre was substituted for Lorient until the disruption of the service in June, 1788. Crèvecoeur had long been convinced that this substitution was advisable,⁶¹ and others agreed with him that Havre offered more direct communication with Paris than did Lorient. When the packets were reestablished in June, 1789, they left from Bordeaux⁶² until the middle of the following year, when they changed back to Lorient, to which port they kept until the close of the service in 1793. There were, however, a few exceptions: the *Washington*, for some reason, left from Saint Malo in January, 1790, as did the packet which arrived at New York in April, 1792. The *Lafayette*, too, is advertised as arriving from Havre, October 4, 1790; and the *Washington* in the autumn of 1791 set out from Havre on the disastrous trip which kept her one hundred and thirty days at sea. But the exceptions just noted are based on newspaper notices — a source of information in regard to the packets which is satisfactory in the main, but not always altogether accurate — so it is possible that the change of port indicated in some of these cases is an error.⁶³

⁶⁰ Arrêt du Conseil, June 28, 1783, quoted by the *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 16, 1783.

⁶¹ See a letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, March 14, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

⁶² See a letter from Jefferson to Monroe, June 17, 1785 (Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 233).

⁶³ As an instance of the liability to misapprehension to which one is subject in regard to the movements of the packets, notice that the Arrêt du Conseil of June, 1783, specifies that the ships were to leave from Port Louis. A letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefou-

It was thought by the directors, when the packets began to run that their first ship would have to find another port than New York, as that was not yet evacuated by the British. Lecoulteux suggested Amboy, but Crèvecoeur objected that Amboy had no harbor in the first place, and in the second could only be reached by way of New York.⁶⁴ But by the time the packet arrived, she was able to land at New York,⁶⁵ and on her return trip carried a number of British officers,⁶⁶ for the Americans took possession of the city five days later. The *Independent Journal* for May 7, 1785, reports the "Packet Warwick, Siouville, L'Orient & Rhode Island," and the *New York Packet*, about a year later, gives the "Packet Maréchal de Castries, Abouville, Boston." Yet, in spite of the fact that Boston, Norfolk and various other ports were suggested from time to time, the packets all came directly to New York, so far as we can learn, except in the two instances just cited. There is nothing to suggest that they were accustomed to touch elsewhere on their way to New York, except the single case of the *Lafayette*, which landed at New London, October 4, 1790, and later proceeded to New York, where it arrived late in November.⁶⁷

At first it was proposed that the packets should leave

cauld, September 16, 1783, shows that the directors at Paris intended to send the first packet to Amboy. Crèvecoeur, however, recommended that it should go to Rhode Island and adds that such would be the case. As a matter of fact, the first packets all left from Lorient and went neither to Amboy nor to any port in Rhode Island, but to New York.

⁶⁴ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, December 16, 1783; at the Library at Mantes.

⁶⁵ *Connecticut Gazette*, January 2, 1784.

⁶⁶ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 16, 1783.

⁶⁷ *Boston Gazette*, December 15, 1783.

France on the third Tuesday of every month. Franklin, as we have seen, suggested that this be changed to the third Wednesday and it was so decided. Until the middle of the following year, however, only one case is recorded of a sailing on Wednesday, but until May of that year there was a departure for every month at some time during the third week. In 1784 there were twelve departures, but the time of sailing was somewhat irregular, generally falling toward the latter part of the month. In 1785 the service dragged. Jefferson wrote to Monroe in June ⁶⁸ that there was talk of sending a packet every six weeks only, and added that he hoped that when Crèvecoeur returned to France he would be able to have them replaced on their monthly basis. We have seen that he was not able to do this, for the ships continued to run at about six weeks' interval throughout 1785 and 1786. The regulations of December 14, 1786 announced that the packets were to leave eight times during the year, on the tenth and twenty-fifth of the month alternately.⁶⁹ They kept very close to this schedule in 1787, in the number of ships sent and in the time of sailing, but in 1788 the service again wavered until it stopped with the sending of the March packet. It was renewed in 1789, but only six departures were promised, to take place on the fifteenth of the month. Ten ships certainly were sent, possibly eleven, from April, 1789, to December, 1790, but only one, so far as the newspaper notices show, left on the chosen date. In 1791 and 1792 the notices of the arrivals and departures of the packets are so scanty as to make it difficult to form any conclusion as to the regularity of the service. There were probably seven departures, at least, in 1791, and five in 1792, but the date at which

⁶⁸ Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 233.

⁶⁹ *Independent Gazette*, April 18, 1787.

these ships sailed is given in only two cases, where it falls toward the latter part of the month.⁷⁰

The departure of the packet from New York was fixed for the first day of the month, but the date was changed to the twentieth of the month, or as near to that day as the time of arrival permitted.⁷¹ This schedule was generally followed until the break in 1788. After 1789, the date of sailing commonly comes during the first half of the month. The ships were generally advertised to sail on the fifteenth. When the notice continued to appear after that date, it was reinforced by the statement that the packet would "positively sail" on the day of postponement. The addition of the clause "wind and weather permitting"⁷² was not an idle one, for the *Courrier de*

⁷⁰ The shipping news furnished by the gazettes is often wretchedly inadequate. Arrivals and clearances are noted unsystematically and darkly. Often we are told merely that "the French packet" has arrived, sometimes we only learn of its coming from an advertisement some firm offers of goods which arrived by the packet. This, together with the fact that the compositors, by their spelling, often represent the names of the French captains rather than reproduce them, leads to considerable confusion. Carelessness even went so far as to announce the intended sailing of a ship which had actually set sail at the time. Count Castiglione's description in 1790 of his journey in the United States tells us that the cafés were generally provided with shipping news. These bulletins and Bradford's marine list, and Thomas Allen's, at New London, if they could be found, would undoubtedly give a good deal of information about the movements of the packets during these years. Unfortunately, such records as the New York Custom House might have had are destroyed.

⁷¹ "At the departure of the packet the next following is to begin its equipment, and the 15 last days of every month are to be employed in getting provisions &c., and receiving on board the goods which are to be embarked upon a particular order signed by the consul at New York, or the director of the packet at l'Orient" (*Rivington's New York Gazette & Universal Advertiser*, December 10, 1783).

⁷² *Gazette de Boston*, May 24, 1784.

l'Europe, which was to sail "positively" on the fifteenth of December, 1784, did not get off until the twenty-first of December,⁷³ and the *Courrier de l'Orient*, advertised "to sail March 15,"⁷⁴ "to sail the 16th instant without fail,"⁷⁵ "to sail positively on Saturday the 19th,"⁷⁶ was again advertised to sail "positively" on Wednesday the 23rd.⁷⁷ The *Journal* does not record its clearance, and one would be inclined to think that the packet yielded to discouragement, if it were not for the announcement later in the year of its return to New York.⁷⁸

The ships first devoted to the service were not specially built for this purpose, but belonged to the royal marine.⁷⁹ In September, shortly before sailing for his new post, Crèvecoeur went with M. Lecoulteux to Lorient where he inspected five of the six ships proposed, and pronounced favorably upon all with the exception of the *Warwick*. His slight opinion of the *Warwick* proved to be well-founded, for on its first trip from France, in February of the following year, it did not put in an appearance until after the packet which sailed a month later! It may be that the ship which he did not see was the *Courrier du Port Louis*, shipwrecked on its first trip, early in 1784, off the coast of Long Island, a disaster partly attributable, the consul wrote at the time, to its bad condition and to its miserable crew.⁸⁰ The ships which made the first seven

⁷³ *Connecticut Courant*, December 28, 1784.

⁷⁴ *Independent Journal*, March 9, 1785.

⁷⁵ Same, March 12.

⁷⁶ Same, March 16.

⁷⁷ Same, March 19.

⁷⁸ *Connecticut Courant*, September 5, 1785.

⁷⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 100.

⁸⁰ Consulat de New York. Dépêche du 1er août, quoted by Robert de Crèvecoeur, p. 313.

voyages were ⁸¹ the *Courrier de l'Europe*, Captain Cornic du Moulin; the *Courrier de l'Amérique*, Captain d'Aboville; the *Courrier du Port Louis*, Captain Tuvache; the *Courrier de New York*, Captain le chevalier de Jaubert; the *Courrier de l'Orient*, Captain de Coetnempren; the *Warwick*, Captain Hulcoq. According to Robert de Crèvecoeur, the *Sylphe*⁸² took the place, in March, 1784, of the shipwrecked *Courrier du Port Louis*. I have found no further reference, however, to this vessel, which he says was the seventh to sail, during the whole of the ten years under consideration, nor to its captain, Hulcoq. It may have made a crossing and then been transferred to some other part of the service, or it may have been re-named. The packet which should have arrived in December did not appear until the fourth of January, 1785. This was the *Martinique*, commanded by Tuvache the captain of the ill-fated *Courrier du Port Louis*. Possibly this is the *Sylphe* under a new name, for re-christenings were not unusual, as may be seen from Coetnempren's vessel, first called the *Courrier de l'Orient* and later the *Fortune*, still later called *Packet No. 3*. In 1785, then, the *Martinique*

⁸¹ The list given in Mr. Stevens' chapter in the *Memorial History of New York* (IV: 541-542), includes the

Courrier de l'Europe,
Courrier de l'Amérique,
Courrier de New York,
Courrier de l'Orient,
Alligator.

This list appears in various newspapers as late as January, 1784, but does not take into account the *Courrier du Port Louis*, which was on its way across the ocean at this time. The *Alligator*, the last of the list, does not appear among the arrivals or departures until May, 1788. Possibly the list of which the gazettes made use was from memoranda of the projected service. A glance at the arrivals and departures of the first year shows that this list is incomplete.

⁸² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 312.

was added, unless we understand that this is the *Sylphe* under a new name, and in 1786 the *Maréchal de Castries*. When the *Columbian Magazine* in May, 1789, reported that the vessels belonging to the packet service between New York and Lorient were put up for sale, it stated that American agents had purchased the *Courrier de l'Europe*, the *Courrier Américain*,⁸³ the *Diligente* and the *Postilion*, "fine vessels of 16 guns each, and so exceedingly well-qualified for sloops of war that it was very extraordinary that they should be disposed of."⁸⁴ The Swedes are purchasers, they add, of the other six, which are still larger. From 1789, when the service was reorganized with Dubois's boats, to 1793, the largest number that is quoted is five, the *Washington*, *Franklin*, *Suffrein*, *Télémaque* and *Sophia*. In 1791 the *Lafayette* is noted.

The first packet to sail, the *Courrier de l'Europe*, is described by Mr. William Bennett⁸⁵ as a "stately French merchantman." Crèvecoeur, in a notice in a Philadelphia newspaper,⁸⁶ refers to it as a 20-gun sloop of war. The *Columbian Magazine* for May, 1789, gives 16 guns. That

⁸³ Probably the *Courrier de l'Amérique*.

⁸⁴ The American agents who bought the
Courrier de l'Europe,
Courrier de l'Amérique,
Diligente (the only reference seen to this ship),
Postilion (ditto),

must have left to the Swedes the

<i>Courrier de New York</i> ,	<i>Sylphe</i> ,
<i>Courrier de l'Orient</i> ,	<i>Martinique</i> ,
<i>Warwick</i> ,	<i>Alligator</i> .

The *Courrier du Port Louis*, it will be remembered, had been wrecked, and the *Maréchal de Castries* was transferred to the East Indies merchant service.

⁸⁵ A few pages are devoted to an account of the establishment of the packet service in his *Catholic Footsteps in Old New York*, pp. 365, ff.

⁸⁶ *Pennsylvania Packet*, November 25, 1784.

it had fourteen rooms we learn from the *New York Gazette*, December 10, 1783. According to Mr. Stevens' account, the cabin was capable of accommodating forty persons at table. Crèvecoeur speaks of its "strength, safety and elegant accommodations," and specially commends the "peculiar goodness of the table and Captain Cornic's well-known courtesy to his passengers." It may have been mere coincidence, or it may have been its reputation for comfort and safety and its record for speed⁸⁷ that led Crèvecoeur to cross the ocean three times on this ship. He would probably have crossed in it a fourth time if it had not been discontinued when he returned to France in 1790. The fact that it was the *Courrier de l'Europe* which Crèvecoeur had fitted up for the passage of the Count and Countess de Broglie in the fall of 1784,⁸⁸ may suggest that the accommodations on this ship were especially good. The packets as they were first organized were furnished with what must have been a fair degree of comfort, indeed even too sumptuously, the consul thought, for he lamented the 40,000 livres and more that were spent for mahogany tables, hangings, glass, etc.⁸⁹ It is interesting to notice that Crèvecoeur arranged to have this ship provided with a lightning-rod before he took passage in it to his new post. The *Pennsylvania Packet*⁹⁰ reports that on her first trip the *Courrier de l'Europe* "met with extreme bad weather . . . and after being eight days at sea, was obliged to put back to the port from whence she came, by which means the Definitive

⁸⁷ Its shortest trip was four weeks, or four weeks and two days.

⁸⁸ For an account of the preparations that were made for the comfort of these two passengers see a letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, March 17, 1785, in the Library at Mantes.

⁸⁹ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, September 16, 1783; in the Library at Mantes.

⁹⁰ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 6, 1783.

Treaty which had just arrived, was put on board her." The arrival of this ship, then, inaugurated not only the opening of the packet service, but a new political era for America.

The *Courrier de l'Orient*, like the *Courrier de l'Europe*, was copper-bottomed and is described as a fine ship with good accommodations for passengers.⁹¹ After Crèvecoeur reserved passage for the Count and Countess de Broglie on the *Courrier de l'Europe*, in order that they might have as comfortable a winter passage as possible,⁹² the Count availed himself of the privilege of the high-born to change his mind, to the great inconvenience and indignation of the consul at New York, and requested a passage instead for the following spring. This was secured for him on the *Courrier de l'Orient*,⁹³ which leads one to think that it was probably little if any inferior to the first ship.

The *Courrier de l'Amérique* was the same size as the *Courrier de l'Europe*; the *Courrier du Port Louis* must have been as large or larger, since it carried a crew of thirty-five men, exceeding by five the average number of seamen required by the packets. It left France on its first trip in bad condition and was, as has been said, wrecked⁹⁴ off the coast of Long Island early in 1784.⁹⁵ The *Warwick* was an unsatisfactory ship from the beginning. It was probably smaller than the others which have

⁹¹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, October 4, 1784.

⁹² Crèvecoeur had the "grande chambre" divided in half for their use and two beds supported on "balanciers." Thirty pounds were spent out of his private purse, besides what the captain paid for provisions, etc. (Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, March 17, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.)

⁹³ *Columbian Magazine* for May, 1789.

⁹⁴ See page 192.

⁹⁵ *Connecticut Gazette*, February 13, 1784.

been described, for Crèvecoeur refers to it as "ce petit vaisseau,"⁹⁶ and adds that it carried too much sail and too heavy masts for its size. "This miserable 'Warwick,'" he says, was "un de ces mauvais Machines que Mess^{rs}. de la Marine ont donné, disant qu'il étoit assés bon Pour le service des P. B."⁹⁷ Although it was a miserable craft, the *Warwick* continued to run at least as late as the middle of 1785. As the *Sylphe* is only once referred to (Robert de Crèvecoeur speaks of it as replacing the wrecked *Courrier du Port Louis*), it seems possible, as has been shown, that the *Martinique*, which was commanded by the captain of that unfortunate ship, is the *Sylphe* under a new name. The *Martinique*⁹⁸ ran only a short time and little is known about her. Her only voyage whose length is recorded is a very quick run of twenty-seven days.

An especial interest attaches to the *Maréchal de Castries*, which began to run in the spring of 1786, because it was built for the French government, at Crèvecoeur's suggestion, by the American ship-wright, John Peck.⁹⁹ It ran

⁹⁶ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, March 14, 1785; Library at Mantes.

⁹⁷ Letters to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, April 24, and March 15, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

⁹⁸ Robert de Crèvecoeur says that the *Martinique* made her first voyage in May, 1785. This must be an error, as the *Pennsylvania Packet*, January 6, 1785, records the arrival of the *Martinique* under Captain Tuvache.

⁹⁹ John Peck, considered as one of the best ship-wrights of his day, built the *Belisarius*, *Rattlesnake* and *Hazard* of Revolutionary fame. The consul felt so convinced of the importance of his discoveries that he made great efforts to induce the French government to make a contract with him to impart the secret of his calculations which had invariably proved so successful. His ships were not only remarkable for their speed, but were said to carry a fourth more than other ships (letters to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, in the Library at Mantes, and

until the disruption of 1788, when it was transferred to other waters. Unfortunately, this ship, which was one of the best that adorned the service, was wrecked off the coast of Africa in the autumn of that year. A New York paper,¹⁰⁰ commenting on this disaster, referred to the *Maréchal de Castries* as one of the most valuable of the East India ships. The *Courrier de l'Orient* is referred to later as *Packet Number 7*, while the *Courrier de l'Europe* reappears as *Packet Number 3*. The *Courrier de New York* is called *Packet Number 9*, and the *Maréchal de Castries*, *Packet Number 2*. It is not possible to identify the other numbered packets.

The ships which Claude Dubois arranged in 1789 to despatch between America and France proved to be unsatisfactory. Their voyages were long and uncertain. The *Jean Jacques* was described as a miserable vessel of eighty tons by Crèvecoeur's friend M. de la Forest, who adds that its crew numbered only nine. The *Télémaque* was far too small, the *Franklin* was not much better, the *Washington* was larger — three hundred and fifty tons — and was described as a fast-sailing ship. This seems hard to understand unless the statement that she took nearly four months to reach New York is an error on the part of Robert de Crèvecoeur. The *Washington* went back to France early in 1793. She was followed by the *Suffrein* in February, probably the last voyage of the last packet.

The officers of the packets were chosen, according to the proclamation of June 1783,¹⁰¹ from among those in the king's service. They were paid, as well as the crew, by the king, and kept under the discipline established by the ordi-

Brissot's *Examen Critique etc.*, p. 154). John Peck, selectman of Boston, at one time owner of the Province House, is possibly the same man.

¹⁰⁰ *New York Journal*, November 6, 1788.

¹⁰¹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 16, 1783.

nances of the royal marine. Besides directing his ship, the captain kept charge of the late mail, received applications for freight or passage, at least in the later years of the service, and on the evening of the day before sailing made out an account of all the goods embarked, signed by himself, his second, and the director of the packets. At the ship's arrival at New York he immediately informed the consul, or his agent, and delivered the mail into his hand.¹⁰² The packets did not receive gold or silver as freight, but the captain, we learn, was allowed to take them on his own responsibility. The most distinguished of those who served was Cornic du Moulin,¹⁰³ who commanded the *Courrier de l'Europe* until July 28, 1785, perhaps until the end of that year. He became admiral of the naval forces in the Channel in 1794.¹⁰⁴ ¹⁰⁵ In 1786, when the *Maréchal de Castries* was built, Crèvecoeur recommended that M. d'Aboville,¹⁰⁶ who sailed the *Courrier de l'Amérique*, be appointed captain, and Clement le Fournier¹⁰⁷ his lieutenant. These two men he described as the best officers without question in the entire packet service.¹⁰⁸ "I wish and pray you wou'd recommend to his [the minister of marine] particular notice the Capt. D'Aboville," the consul wrote, ". . . he is a most excellent seaman, as I have told you before, humane to his people, carefull of Expenses & entirely bent on the good of this

¹⁰² *Rivington's N. Y. Gazette & Univ'l Advertiser*, Dec. 10, 1783.

¹⁰³ Pierre François Cornic du Moulin.

¹⁰⁴ According to P. Lévot in the "*Biographie Universelle*."

¹⁰⁵ See a notice in the *New York Packet*, Dec. 15, 1783, where the *Courrier de l'Europe's* captain is given as "Tournich," an attempt on the part of the compositor, one may guess, at "Cornic."

¹⁰⁶ François Marie, comte d'Aboville, born at Brest, January 23, 1727.

¹⁰⁷ Captain of the *Courrier de l'Europe* in 1787.

¹⁰⁸ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 21, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

Establishment, the Great freight . . . which this Vessel [*Courrier de l'Amérique*] will make is in part due to the publick confidence which he has inspired: he speaks very good English, a very material thing — what I say of him is entirely unknown & unasked, but it is a justice I cannot refuse him. . . .” “It were devoutly to be wished that every captain of these 5 Paquebots understood their affairs as well, as then the Public Confidence would be well Grounded. . . .”¹⁰⁹ Referring again to these three we have named, he says, “3 excellent officers we have already, there remains to lack for only 12.”¹¹⁰

Siouville, captain of the *Warwick*, was so poor an officer in Crèvecoeur's judgment that he says hotly to his friend the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, “Jay tant prié pour Lamour de Dieu qu'il ne revinsse pas,” but adds regretfully, “ainsy que le congrès Je nay pas que Le Pouvoir de La recommandation et cela ne vas pas loin.”¹¹¹ The other officers are classed despairingly by the consul as “mauvais sujets,” again “mere blackguards,” whom he has refused to present to the governor because they had not a white shirt nor a decent coat among them.¹¹² They apparently improved in that respect, at least, for he says in their favor, two months later, “two thirds of these men have nothing respectable about them but their uniforms. . . .” “I don't know where they fished up such specimens.”¹¹³ In the summer of 1784 d'Aboville and Fournier, at Crèvecoeur's suggestion, made soundings and examinations of the perilous region around Sandy Hook, and greatly benefited by them the following

¹⁰⁹ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 15, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

¹¹⁰ Letter to the Duke, February 12, 1784.

¹¹¹ Letter to the Duke, March 14, 1785.

¹¹² Letter to the Duke, January 14, 1785.

¹¹³ Letter to the Duke, March 17, 1785: “Je ne sçay ou on a este Pescher de pareilles sujets.”

winter, when they were able to bring their vessels alone into the harbor. The other captains received the same advice from the director, but refused to listen to it. Crèvecoeur wrote, however: "je viens d'Envoyer L'Esquisse d'une petite ordonnance au Ministre, si il l'approuve et la signe, alors ces Mess^{rs} ne Perdront pas leur temps come ils font à Galante Les Dames."¹¹⁴ Of the later captains we hear little. The *Gazette of the United States* in 1791¹¹⁵ published a letter from Captain Julian Jean Duroutois, of the *Franklin*, to the New York Marine Society, acknowledging his reception as an honorary member into that body, in recognition of a rescue he had performed when last at sea. The other captains are only known to us through the various misspellings of their names in the gazettes, when the arrival or clearance of their vessels is announced.

There were three officers on each vessel and the crews probably numbered about thirty men. The *Courrier du Port Louis* had thirty-five men. Unfortunately the managers of the packets did not permit the officers to select their own seamen, so the crew was generally poor and insufficient.¹¹⁶ Crèvecoeur was convinced of the unwisdom of this arrangement, and asked the Duke de la Rochefoucauld to propose to the new ministry in 1784¹¹⁷ that the captains should be allowed to choose their own crew, and that the seamen should receive twenty-four francs^{118 119} a month. Poor the sailors

¹¹⁴ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 21, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

¹¹⁵ February 5, 1791.

¹¹⁶ "Pourquoi La Marine de France n'a-t-elle pas encore pu produire, pour les 5 vais^s, 15 bons officiers, honnestes, décents gens dont on [n]ait pas de honte — & 150 Matelots Propres, attachés a leur vaisseau. . . ." (Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke, January 14, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.)

¹¹⁷ Letter to the Duke, January 15, 1784. ¹¹⁸ "24".

¹¹⁹ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke, February 12, 1784.

evidently were. It was the fault of the crew, as well as of the bad condition of the ship, according to the consul, which led to the wreck of the *Courrier du Port Louis* on her first trip. That desertions, too, were not unknown may be seen from the fact that twelve of the *Martinique's* crew abandoned the ship upon reaching New York, in 1785, and had to be replaced by the consul.¹²⁰

What the founders of the packet service hoped to accomplish has been explained in a former section. Franklin had said that it would be very useful to merchants immediately, and profitable to the revenue of the post-office, at least after some time. But primarily it was a mail-service, or rather it was *the* mail-service, for the transportation of letters was restricted to the packets alone.¹²¹ By 1788 this monopoly was abused; Brissot declares that at that time there was such negligence in the French ministry that the mail for America, which was to have left in May, had then been at the office for four or five months with what arrived later. "Indeed," he says, "I do not know even whether it was ever sent."¹²² He adds that the *Cato*, upon which he sailed, offered to take charge of the mail, as did certain other vessels, but that the offer was refused. It is not fair, however, to judge of the efficiency of the service by its darkest days before the interruption of 1788. Until June, 1785, the mails came and went with fair regularity; eleven mails were brought to this country in 1784, and eleven more in 1785.

Letters for America were sealed with the king's arms and deposited in a particular place in the packet made on purpose to receive them. Those which arrived after the mail

¹²⁰ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 14, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

¹²¹ *Rivington's N. Y. Gazette & Univ'l Advertiser*, Dec. 10, 1783; and *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 311.

¹²² *Examen Critique etc.*, p. 71.

was made up were placed in a private box kept by the captain. When the ship was delayed by contrary winds past her appointed time for sailing, late-coming mail was made up and sent on board every four hours until the packet finally got under way.¹²³ The mail which arrived in the first packet from France was sent to Philadelphia to be distributed,¹²⁴ but thereafter it was delivered by the captain of each incoming packet into the hand of the consul at New York, or to his deputy, by whom it was turned over to the post-office authorities.¹²⁵

Letters for France were received at all the post-offices in the United States and forwarded to New York on the payment of the inland postage by the sender. These letters and those put into the office at New York were made up at the office of the consul the evening before the packet returned to France.¹²⁶ On its arrival the mail, strange to say, was sent directly to Paris, instead of being opened and distributed at Lorient. The consul regretted this unfortunate arrangement in a letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld in December, 1784:

"On dit icy que toutes les Lettres vont à Paris pour y estre Examinées & que de la on les renvoye a Lorient & ailleurs, cecy est très vray & tend à diminuer icy La confiance Publique — on m'avoit Promis des reglements de Postes sages & Encourageant; Mais J'y renonce & Je n'en parleray plus. . . ." ¹²⁷

¹²³ Crèvecoeur to Jefferson, probably before February 7, 1787, (Letters to Jefferson, 1786-1787, Library of Congress).

¹²⁴ Lecoulteux to Jefferson, September 28, 1787 (Letters to Jefferson, 1786-1787, Library of Congress).

¹²⁵ The *Courrier de L'Amérique* arrived Dec. 13, 1783. Mail was sent to the post-office in Smith Street (*Rivington's N.Y. Gazette & Univ'l Advertiser*, December 17, 1783).

¹²⁶ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 30, 1783.

¹²⁷ In the Library at Mantes. The copyist dates this Dec. 5, 1785, but I believe that it belongs to 1784. Compare it with the letter of Dec. 3, 1784.

Twice in the following month the complaint was renewed, but how long this particular abuse continued is uncertain.

As early as January 15, 1784, Crèvecoeur expressed his conviction that cheap postage was much to be desired, as that would give the packets full employment. The rate of postage he fixed, accordingly, at forty sous an ounce, but Lecoulteux put it up to eighty sous. This provision was changed, however, for in May of the same year Crèvecoeur announced in a Boston paper that the rate of a single letter from New York to Lorient was twenty sous, or ten and a half sterling. If the ordinary "single letter" weighed half an ounce, this was a return to the rate he had proposed.¹²⁸ One year later (1785) the *Independent Journal* advertised a still lower scale of prices. A single letter went then from Lorient to any port in America for fourteen sous. If it weighed more than half an ounce, the cost was twenty-four sous. Letters under cover were fifteen sous. At the end of the following year (1786), the postage rates, as well as the rates on freight, were raised¹²⁹ in order to meet the expenses of the service, which found itself greatly embarrassed. Since in 1784 inland postage rates in America were treble the European rates, according to a statement of Crèvecoeur's in the *Boston Gazette*, he provided an arrangement by which letters collected into a bundle and sent by the Providence stage to "Samuel Chace of that town" might be forwarded to him through the captains of the Providence packets. It is not unlikely that a similar arrangement may have been made at other points from which coast packets sailed.

Five stamps were made at the consul's suggestion, one for each packet, so that every letter from America might bear the name of the ship that carried it. "I think," he said to the Duke, "that it will greatly serve to spread the news of our establishment which Mr Le Coulteux has taken no

¹²⁸ *Boston Gazette*, May 24, 1784.

¹²⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 315.

pains to do.”¹³⁰ He adds, “I send by this Pacquet 5 such stamps to Lorient to the end that all the Letters may be marked Elegantly & that these Letters may have the same effect through this continent where they Love to see things well done and well organized.”¹³¹ Shortly before the first packet sailed, more than three hundred letters¹³² were gathered at Lorient. The second packet, on her return, carried “two Bushels of Letters,”¹³³ to the very evidently expressed satisfaction of the consul. A year¹³⁴ later, however, we hear Crèvecoeur lamenting the inefficiency of the service, the apparent indifference on the part of the bankers who were supposed to direct it, the absence of notices in the French papers concerning the arrival and departure of the packets, and the lack of coöperation between the post-office at Lorient and those of other countries.¹³⁵

“Why are letters carried to Paris before being distributed elsewhere in the kingdom, even (strange to tell) those for Lorient . . . they say here that it is in order that they may be read. Judge of the effect this has on the minds of the people. Why is there no understanding be-

¹³⁰ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 19, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

¹³¹ Letter to the Duke, Jan. 19, 1784; Library at Mantes.

¹³² Letter to the Duke, Sept. 16, 1783; Library at Mantes.

¹³³ Letter to the Duke, Jan. 15, 1784; Library at Mantes.

¹³⁴ Letter to the Duke, January 14, 1785; Library at Mantes.

¹³⁵ There seems to be some ground for this suspicion, for Jefferson wrote in 1785 (July 12), to the president of Congress (Randall's *Jefferson*, I: 251), “You are right in supposing all letters opened which come either through the French or English channel, unless trusted to a passenger. Your's had evidently been opened, and I think I never received one through the postoffice which had not been. It is generally discoverable by the smoakiness of the wax, and faintness of the re-impression. Once they sent me a letter open, having forgotten to re-seal it.” Again in 1787 he wrote to John Jay, “Your letters which come by the packet, if put into the mail at New York or into the post-office at Havre, wear proofs that they have been opened” (H. A. Washington's edition of *Jefferson's Works*, II: 311).

tween the French and American post-offices. . . . Why is there no agreement between the departure of the packets and the arrival of the American mail. Often the packets leave in the morning and the mail arrives that night. . . . Why does the triste Gazette de France not announce the arrival of the Packet-Boats: the length of the crossing &c. Why does it not tell when the mail for America is to leave for Lorient . . . why are they holding 500 letters at Lorient because they are not franked."

The final arraignment seems conclusive proof of the mismanagement of the mail-service: "Why do the passengers and the captain carry more letters than are in the mails?"

But although half despairing, Crèvecoeur was active and constant in his endeavors to have the abuses which he saw so plainly put to rights, and he sent page after page of remonstrance and advice to France. At the same time he felt himself unequal to the demand which the care of the mails and the direction of the service required, and was sometimes impatient at the duties which he felt interrupted his consular activities. "I do not wish to become his clerk [Le-coulteux'] for that is exactly what he asks; to count the letters, receive money & make out the exchange. . . . I told him that I did not understand all that & that if he wished to appoint someone for that office I would find him a man a hundred times more clever than I who would undertake it, but no — & after all I am consul and not agent for the post-office gratis.¹³⁶ Let him manage the packets and direct them as he will, I shall not concern myself with them." A year later he is still without help,¹³⁷ "not having received from the Minister an order to employ any one, nor having fixed a moderate salary as M. Le Coulteux promised. . . ." ¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Letter to the Duke, Sept. 16, 1783; Library at Mantes.

¹³⁷ It is not clear to what extent William Seton, who signs some of the packet-notices "Deputy-agent" soon after Crèvecoeur arrived at New York until the spring of the following year, was able to lighten the consul's labors in this respect.

¹³⁸ Letter to the Duke, Feb. 17, 1785; Library at Mantes.

The apathy on the part of the French directors and the government can only be understood by remembering the embarrassment of the treasury at this time and the rapidity with which public events were moving in France.

Besides their function as mail-carriers, the packet-ships offered a limited passenger service. During their first six years, that is, from the fall of 1783 to the fall of 1789, they carried more than eighty-nine passengers. During the temporary suspension of the service in 1788-1789 there were about twelve months when no ships ran, so these "eighty-nine" passengers are to be distributed really over about five years. In all probability the number was much larger, because this figure includes only those specified by name or number. For example, the first packet to arrive at New York mentions in its passenger-list Crèvecoeur, Létombe, consul at Boston, Laforest, consul for Georgia, and John Thaxter, who carried the Definitive Treaty.¹³⁹ Here only four names are given, but one of the papers of the time gives M. de la Forest as "one of many passengers ¹⁴⁰ arriving in this packet," ¹⁴¹ so that the actual number may have been twice or even thrice four. On her return trip the *Courrier de l'Europe* had "a number of gentlemen passengers, among them several officers of the British army." In this case no guess as to the number is possible, so they are excluded entirely from the "eighty-nine" which has been offered as the lowest estimate of those whom the packets carried.

¹³⁹ *Rivington's N. Y. Gazette & Univ'l Advertiser*, Dec. 17, 1783.

¹⁴⁰ It is probable that Barbé de Marbois was one of the "many passengers" not specified by name, who arrived Nov. 19, 1783, on the *Courrier de l'Europe* (See *Conn. Gaz.*, Dec. 5, 1783). Two vice-consuls are referred to as passengers on this ship; possibly one of these was Toscan, who served under Létombe at Boston (see a letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Jan. 2, 1784; Library at Mantes).

¹⁴¹ For further details concerning this voyage, see Abbé Mably's *Observations* etc., Vol. III, p. 250.

As often as not, too, the arrival or departure of the packet is given without any indication as to how many passengers were on board. The largest number referred to at any one time in the newspaper notices is sixteen.¹⁴² When Crèvecoeur returned from France in June, 1787, ten of his fellow-passengers are specified.¹⁴³ At first only eight were given; a later paper added another name, and an account of the crossing which one of the other passengers¹⁴⁴ wrote in later years supplies the tenth.¹⁴⁵ At the time the *Courrier du Port Louis* was wrecked, she was carrying six passengers, two of whom were lost.¹⁴⁶ Several times four passengers are mentioned, sometimes only a single name is given. We may either conclude in such case that there were no more, or that the other names were not considered of sufficient importance to include. A letter from Lecoulteux to Jefferson (September 28, 1787) tells us that the number of passengers who might be carried was limited to twenty-three.¹⁴⁷

Two ships, the *Courrier de l'Europe* and the *Courrier de l'Orient*, are specifically referred to in the newspapers as having good accommodations for passengers. Their qualifications have already been discussed. It is perhaps noteworthy that the Rev. Samuel Wales, professor of Divinity in Yale College, who was travelling for his health in 1786, chose one of these ships, the *Courrier de l'Orient*, for his

¹⁴² Carried by the *Courrier de l'Europe* (see *Penn. Packet*, Nov. 14, 1787), when she arrived at New York Nov. 15, 1787 (spoken at sea earlier).

¹⁴³ One of these was John Paul Jones.

¹⁴⁴ See *Recollections of Samuel Breck*, H. E. Scudder, p. 85.

¹⁴⁵ This was the daughter of M. de la Beaumanoir, governor of the Hôtel des Invalides, who went over, under Crèvecoeur's escort, to marry M. de la Forest.

¹⁴⁶ *Connecticut Gazette*, February 13, 1784.

¹⁴⁷ Letters to Jefferson, 1786-1789; Library of Congress.

voyage.¹⁴⁸ From this it appears that a packet-voyage was not always so arduous as Professor McMaster has suggested. To be sure, the journey was sometimes very long, but it was also sometimes surprisingly short. The *Martinique* ran from Lorient to New York in three weeks and six days, and the *Courrier de l'Europe* made the same trip in four weeks. But against these must be remembered the five, six, and seven weeks, in one case, seven weeks and five days, that the same excellent *Courrier de l'Europe* required. Of course it was accident that kept the *Washington* one hundred and thirty-one days at sea, exceeding by twenty-six days the English packet's fifteen weeks in 1782, but the *New York's* sixty-two days and the *Télémaque's* seventy are not commented upon by the gazettes, and so were probably not considered extraordinary.

When we consider the length of time that a voyage often consumed, the price required for the passage does not seem very high. For the privilege of carrying three trunks or six hundred weight of baggage, and sharing the captain's table, five hundred livres was required. For a servant with one trunk the charge was two hundred livres more. Those who chose to live on ship's rations and limit themselves to one trunk, might cross for two hundred livres.^{149 150} The regulations of December 14, 1786, raised the first price to six hundred livres; the charge for a servant's passage was the same, but a traveller living on ship's rations could go for forty livres less than was charged at first. These regulations further allowed a reduction to those who dined at the table of the master or surgeon. The charge in this case was three hundred and sixty livres.¹⁵¹ In order to take passage, travellers

¹⁴⁸ *New Haven Gazette*, May 11, 1786.

¹⁴⁹ *Rivington's New York Gazette and Universal Advertiser*, Dec. 10, 1783.

¹⁵⁰ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 16, 1783.

¹⁵¹ *Independent Gazetteer*, April 18, 1787.

had to obtain an order from the consul at New York or the director at Lorient, who thereupon assigned the number of their cabin. The price of the passage was payable in advance to the director at either port or to the captain.¹⁵²

The Arrêt du Conseil of June 28, 1783, expressly stated that in order to prevent this establishment from being prejudicial to the operations of the merchants, the king had limited the service of the packets to the transportation of letters and passengers with their trunks, and certain effects of great value. It is further provided that no goods in bales or casks were to be carried. "Wine and liquors in bottles, new fashions, cloaths for men and women and other precious effects" were allowed, but special permission was required for consigning goods by these ships. Gold and silver, as we saw, could not be received as freight, but the captain might take them on his own account, in which case he alone was responsible for them.^{153 154} Upon the occasion of Crèvecoeur's visit to Boston in the spring of 1784, a M. Grandchamp, a somewhat difficult person whose chief "difficulty" lay in the determined way in which he set out to serve his own interests and the reluctance with which he allowed himself to be detached from those interests, made use of his opportunity as deputy-agent for the consul and his consequent familiarity with the captains of the packets, to have many things sent over to him from France free of freight, and to send back tobacco on his own account. Upon Crèvecoeur's return, the governor intimated that it was hoped that Crèvecoeur would use his authority to prevent the king's ships from bringing contraband articles into a country where the laws in regard to them were so moderate. This Crève-

¹⁵² *N. Y. Gazette*, Dec. 10, 1783.

¹⁵³ *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 16, 1783.

¹⁵⁴ *Rivington's New York Gazette and Universal Advertiser*, December 10, 1783.

coeur promised to do, although he had great difficulty in getting his deputy to release the position he had been asked to fill temporarily and had found so profitable.¹⁵⁵

French wine was an article that Crèvecoeur felt convinced could be brought here to great advantage. He encouraged its importation by various means. The Americans, he observes, do not find French wines to their taste and so fall back on port and madeira. The only remedy for this is to send over only the best. He adds, "I have never ceased asking that wines in cases might be shipped here at half-rate on the packets . . . in order to be afforded to the Americans as low and as cheap as possible."¹⁵⁶ The Duke de la Rochefoucauld, by sending to the consul from time to time cases of French wine and brandy of a sort which he felt would find acceptance here, helped to encourage this exportation. Crèvecoeur was not slow to share these with his friends,¹⁵⁷ who expressed their appreciation of their quality. The restriction upon the importation of liquor in casks seems to have been raised by 1793, for in January of that year a store in New York advertises for sale "33 pipes and I cask of brandy just received from Lorient by the French packet 'Gen. Washington.'" ¹⁵⁸

In 1788 Francis Durand, of 15 Queen Street, advertised for sale, imported in the French packets, cotton and silk fabrics by the yard, umbrellas of different sizes, men's black and white hose, . . . "Black Modes (?)," "White and Colored Women's Kid Gloves."¹⁵⁹ There was a greater variety in the later importations. In 1791 Aaron Vail, of 156 Water

¹⁵⁵ Letter to the Duke, December 14, 1784; Library at Mantes.

¹⁵⁶ Letter to the Duke, March 15, 1785; at Mantes.

¹⁵⁷ Letters to the Duke, January 5, 1784, and November 5, 1784; Library at Mantes.

¹⁵⁸ *Daily Advertiser*, January 19, 1793.

¹⁵⁹ *Connecticut Courant*, June 16, 1788.

Street, advertised a few tons of cordage brought by the *Washington*;¹⁶⁰ Desdoity advertised in 1793 "12 tons of plaster of Paris, brought by the packet and a parcel of hats."¹⁶¹ "1300 Burr Stones" also came by the same ship. One of the most conglomerate cargoes is the one referred to by Desdoity & Co. in their advertisement of February 11, 1793,¹⁶² wherein they announce among their last importations by the packet, "an elegant assortment of Dry Goods" and — "one piano-forte, human hair, window-glasses, sail duck and brandy." They add that they have also a mast of about eighty-one feet in length and thirty inches in diameter.

A few things travelled freight-free on the packets. In the *New York Journal*,¹⁶³ the public is told by the consul that it may have upon request at his office, for purposes of experiment, seeds of the kinds of grass used most successfully in artificial meadows in France. The only charge is land-carriage from Caen to Port Lorient, . . . "It being his Majesty's intention that the Packets shall bring out whatever may be useful to the citizens of America, in arts, science & husbandry, free of frieght & every other expense."¹⁶⁴ This provision worked both ways, and we find the consul sending back to France in return, by the packets, seeds, trees and small plants for the benefit of French experimenters in agriculture and horticulture, and samples of wood for ship-building for the consideration of the French government, as well as specimens of window-glass, nails, and many other articles, which he thought might be imitated with

¹⁶⁰ *The Mail*, July 5, 1791.

¹⁶¹ *Daily Advertiser*, January 9, 1793.

¹⁶² *Daily Advertiser*.

¹⁶³ March 3, 1784.

¹⁶⁴ Letters from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, December 29, 1783, March 15, 1785, and other dates; Library at Mantes.

profit by French manufacturers.¹⁶⁵ Woolens of American make, chiefly from Massachusetts, he sent in large quantities, with a recommendation that their excellence be observed and if possible imitated by the French. With one hand Crèvecoeur thus helped American manufacturers, while with the other he tried to further the interests of the French manufacturers. In no uncertain voice he declares his conviction that France is not taking sufficient care of her commerce with the United States. England, he explains, by the superiority of her manufactures and the greater insight of her merchants, is monopolizing the trade of her former colonists. Unless France will concern herself with the increasing demand of the Americans for nails, window-glass, paper, cordage, sail-cloth, paints, oils, brushes, hardware, and iron-work, instead of merely furnishing her with luxuries, and those often none too good in quality, the trade between the two countries will soon sink into insignificance.

But in his efforts in behalf of the enlargement of commerce between the two countries Crèvecoeur was working at considerable disadvantage. He writes at one time that he fears his efforts will lead his own countrymen to regard him as an anti-Gallican, and yet a glance at the correspondence which we have so often quoted will convince any reader of the minute interest which the consul took in the improvement and extension of French manufactures. To some

¹⁶⁵ "J'ai osé avancer et prouver à ce Ministre que nos manufactures des choses de première nécessité, ne sont point assés perfectionnée, ni éclairée en France. Pour que notre commerce acquière une base solide il faut absolument que nous imitions les anglois dans la façon de ces articles. Rien seroit aussi aisé à faire sous l'inspection et avec l'encouragement du gouvernement. . . . J'ai recueilli des échantillons de tous ces articles avec le plus grand soin et je désire qu'ils contribuent à perfectionner en France des marchandises dont les américains consomment annuellement, une quantité prodigieuse" (Letter to the Duke, November 16, 1784; Library at Mantes).

extent his recommendations seem to have had weight, for we find the packets bringing over both sail-cloth and window-glass, two articles which he advised. But French trade turned for the most part toward the island possessions of France, rather than toward the new republic which she had helped to form. Crèvecoeur saw this plainly, and wrote to his friend in 1784: "there is but little Probability of any Great trad [sic] being on between this state and France, there are many Reasons which forbid it; . . ." ¹⁶⁶ One of these reasons is explained by a statement in a later letter: "there are but very few French settled in New York & among those not one who deserves to be called a Respectable Merchant." ¹⁶⁷ Yet Crèvecoeur continued his efforts unceasingly during his residence at New York, and many pages of recommendation and detailed description of the needs which French exporters might supply, were sent over by the packets, while in their holds went many articles for examination and imitation, and many specimens of American workmanship. Now he sends a request that wines from France be admitted at half rate on the packets; now he asks the Duke to assist him in securing the passage of peltries from the United States free. In spite of the high rate on freight, one hundred and twenty livres a ton, the second ship to sail for France carried a freight of above six thousand pounds, ¹⁶⁸ which shows that merchants on this side were not uninterested in the opportunities which the sailing of the packets offered. Crèvecoeur felt that this price was far too high, and protested against it with the result that it was reduced by the regulations of 1786 to eighty livres a ton. Even this reduction left the price very high, and a complainant in the

¹⁶⁶ March 25th.

¹⁶⁷ Letter to the Duke, May 1, 1784; Library at Mantes.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 15, 1784; Library at Mantes.

Courrier de Boston objects further that the spirit of commerce did not always preside at the regulations. "Why," he asks, "should merchants have to receive permission for shipping their goods?" Why not specify the goods to be excluded, he says, for the arrangement as it existed developed a feeling of uncertainty among merchants and undoubtedly led to discriminations being made in favor of certain consigners.¹⁶⁹

Yet the packet service with all its faults was a benefit to both countries. As carriers of mail, freight, and passengers, these ships were of use to private individuals, and a larger public, who did not use them directly, benefited by the interchange of ideas which they brought about. Three gardens¹⁷⁰ for agricultural and horticultural experiment — the garden of Louis XV. at Versailles, and the so-called "King's Garden," at Bergen Neck, directed by André Michaux, and the garden at New Haven — profited by the privilege of free transportation allowed to their specimens on the packets. American and French manufacturers, too, were indirectly benefited by the samples and recommendations which Crèvecoeur kept constantly sending to France by this means. American farmers experimented with seeds sent here by the French government until grasses common in France became general here,¹⁷¹ and French experimenters became familiar by the same means with American products and American methods of agriculture. We have already learned that two of our American colleges were indebted to the king of France and to his packet-ships for additions to their libraries. In 1784 Lafayette brought with him from France a hundred books for the college at Philadelphia, and also for that at Williamsburgh, the gift of Louis the Sixteenth. "Pray

¹⁶⁹ July 9, 1789.

¹⁷⁰ See the preceding chapter for an account of the two latter.

¹⁷¹ We might instance "sainfoin" and "luzerne."

Mylord Duke exert all your faculties," Crèvecoeur wrote to Rochefoucauld, "and do all you can to represent . . . [the packet service] in its true light, a strong Band of union and Friendship between the two countries." Such it indeed proved to be, and yet it failed often to accomplish what Crèvecoeur had hoped that it might do. It must have been a hard trial to see the plan, so heartily recommended by Franklin and the Maréchal de Castries in its original simplicity, perverted and brought into disesteem by the actions of his fellow-countrymen at Lorient and at Paris. Of all the many projects of Crèvecoeur's contriving, this was the one of which he was most proud, the one which gave him most trouble, most mortification, for it seems to have been conducted by men inspired with indifference, incompetence, or greed. To their charge, as well as to the course of public events in France, we must lay its final failure.

CHAPTER XII

CONSULAR RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES

THE consular agreement between France and the United States did not become a formal understanding until the signing of the convention, November 14, 1788, but from the year 1778 an agreement of some sort had existed. Section 29 of the treaty of amity and commerce, signed by the diplomatic representatives February 6, 1778, agreed to grant the liberty of having each in the ports of the other, consuls, vice-consuls and agents and commissaries whose functions should be regulated by a particular agreement.¹ During the two years that followed there was no development of the consular service on the part of the United States, although the matter was repeatedly urged by Franklin. France, however, was not so slow, for she added to the powers of Gerard,² her minister to the United States, those of "Consul General to Boston and other ports belonging to

¹ Emory R. Johnson, "Early History of the United States Consular Service, 1776-1792," in *Political Science Quarterly*, 1898, Vol. XIII, pp. 19-40.

² Conrad Alexander Gerard was born in 1741. His commission in January, 1778, as minister to the United States from the court of France, refers to him as "royal syndic of the city of Strasburg and secretary of our council of state" (*Secret Journals of Congress*, II:57-58). As first secretary for foreign affairs (see *Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution*, ed. Sparks, I:18, Aug. 17, 1776) he had had some knowledge of conditions in America before he sailed from France in April, 1778, with Silas Deane, one of the American commissioners, who was returning to the United States.

the United States . . ." with authority to appoint consuls and vice-consuls in the places where he should judge this necessary. Gerard arrived the tenth of July (1778), and five days later appointed John Holker naval agent of France in the United States and consul at the port of Philadelphia.³ A consul for Maryland was appointed in October,⁴ and M. de Valnais, who had been consul at Boston in 1777, was re-appointed to that post in January, 1779, while in July, 1779, Robert Morris was deputed as Holker's agent at Philadelphia, and William Smith as his agent at Baltimore.

In November Gerard was succeeded by Luzerne,⁵ who came to America accompanied by Barbé-Marbois, who acted

³ John Holker came to America June 18, 1778 (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, III:45). He was formerly an inspector general of manufactures in France. One of the principal contracts for clothing for the French army was made with him (*Ibid.* I:151). Soon after his arrival he presented a paper to Congress declaring that he came with a verbal message to Congress from the minister of France (Vergennes, the minister for foreign affairs), touching our treaty with Great Britain, etc. (*Ibid.* I:403). Apparently he went beyond his instructions in so doing, or failed in tact in executing them, for Vergennes, when questioned in regard to him, expressed his surprise at the step M. Holker had taken. He added that M. Holker had no verbal commission from the ministry, but that he had been desired to write from time to time to the Count de Vergennes such information as he could gather in regard to the state of things and the temper of the people (*Ibid.* I:447-448). In 1779 the *Pennsylvania Packet* published a severe attack upon Holker (July 24th), because of the measures he took to procure flour for the French fleet. Gerard defended him (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Wharton, I:134) and Congress took action in his support Aug. 2, 1779 (*Secret Journals of Congress*, II: 559-560).

⁴ The Chevalier d'Annemours was made consul of the five southern states in 1782 (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, XI:87), which commission was later limited to Maryland and Virginia alone. It was probably he whom Gerard appointed.

⁵ Anne-César de la Luzerne was born at Paris in 1741. He was educated at the école des chevaux-legers and later became an aide-de-camp of the Duke de Broglie, with whom he made several campaigns.

as secrétaire to the legation. In 1779, too, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur,⁶ Létombe was called to the consulship at Boston. April 25, 1781, Toscan was sent from France as vice-consul to Boston,⁷ and in September Létombe was recognized as consul for Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations and New Hampshire,⁸ while Mr. Holker was assigned the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, and New Jersey.⁹ In the spring of 1782 (May 7th), the Chevalier d'Annemours was appointed

In 1762 he was major-general of the cavalry and then colonel of the grenadiers of France. In 1776 he gave up his career as a soldier and became a diplomat. He was sent as ambassador to Bavaria at the court of Maximilian-Joseph in 1776, where he met with great success (*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*). Upon his appointment to the American embassy, Arthur Lee, one of our commissioners at Paris, wrote, "M. de Luzerne's family is among the best and most honorable of this country . . . he is a gentleman of honor and ability and his conduct is likely to correspond with his rank and ability . . . he will not descend to anything that may either dishonor himself or disturb us" (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, II:245). Luzerne arrived the twenty-first of September, 1779, and received his first audience of Congress, November 17th. The following year he contracted a loan, on his own responsibility, to aid the American troops. He wrote to Congress on the sixteenth of September that he expected to leave Philadelphia for some weeks, but that M. Marbois (his secretary) would remain as chargé des affaires (*Secret Journals of Congress*, II:574-575). In 1784 Luzerne again left Marbois in charge; this absence was of long duration and finally ended in his acceptance of an appointment to the English embassy and in his resignation of the post in America. He was transferred to the post in London in January, 1788 (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Wharton, I: 424), and died there in 1791. Luzerne was highly thought of during his term of service in America. He received warm testimonials at his departure, and the Pennsylvanians, as a mark of their gratitude, gave his name to one of the counties of their state.

⁶ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 352, note 1.

⁷ *Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Wharton, IV: 389.

⁸ *Secret Journals of Congress*, III: 23.

⁹ *Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, XI:3.

consul to Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia.¹⁰ In 1783, January, Oster appears as vice-consul at Philadelphia;¹¹ and in April there is a reference in a Philadelphia paper to "Peter Chauveau, late agent of the French navy in this port."¹² In the summer of 1783 the consul-generalship was given to Barbé-Marbois and a number of other changes were made in the service, so that by January, 1784, France had a consul general, four consuls, and five vice-consuls in the United States.¹³ These were as follows:

Marbois ¹⁴.....Consul General

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XI: 87.

¹¹ *Pennsylvania Packet*, Jan. 14, 1783.

¹² *Ibid.*, April 26, 1783.

¹³ *Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks XI:179.

¹⁴ François de Barbé-Marbois was born at Metz, January 31, 1745. Like Crèvecoeur, he had lived in America before his appointment to consular office, for he had accompanied the Chevalier de la Luzerne as secretary to the embassy in 1779, and during Luzerne's absence in 1780, occupied the position of chargé des affaires (*Secret Journals of Congress*, Sept. 19, 1780). Soon after the peace, when the new consular appointments were made, Marbois was created consul general. During the second absence of Luzerne, beginning in 1784, Marbois again acted as chargé des affaires, a post which he kept until the arrival of M. Otto, September 1, 1785. In this same year the *Connecticut Gazette* (July 9, 1784) reports his marriage (July 1st) to "the accomplished Miss Moore, daughter of the Honorable William Moore, late President of the State of Pennsylvania." Two months later (August 30th) Marbois informed Congress of his appointment to the intendancy of San Domingo. In the same communication he announced that M. Otto would succeed him as chargé des affaires. The position of consul general was transferred to Laforest, who at this time was acting in Crèvecoeur's stead at New York. In 1790 Marbois returned to France, and during the following ten years was in and out of favor according to the turn of political affairs. In 1800 he was made minister of finance, and in 1805 he helped to negotiate the cession of Louisiana to the United States. Until his death in 1837, Marbois held offices and lost them

Létombe¹⁵. . Consul to New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island

successively, under Napoleon and the Bourbons. Of his writings, which are numerous, those which reflect his stay in America are: *Complot d'Arnold et de Sir Henri Clinton contre les États-Unis de l'Amérique et contre le général Washington en septembre 1780*, Paris, 1816; *Culture du trèfle, de la luzerne et du sainfoin*, Paris, 1792 (see Crèvecoeur's earlier paper on this same subject in the Appendix, pp. 326-330); *Histoire de la Louisiane et de la cession de cette colonie par la France aux États-Unis*, Paris, 1828.

¹⁵ Philippe André-Joseph de Létombe was born at Condé in 1738. He had served (1770) on the supreme council at Porte-au-Prince before he was called to the consulship at Boston, which was in 1779, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 352, note 1). As early as 1777 (*Secret Journals of Congress*, III:495) and as late as January 21, 1779 (see "The Early History of the United States Consular Service," 1776-1792, by Emory R. Johnson in *Polit. Sci. Qy.*, 1898, Vol. XIII, p. 28), this post had been held by a M. de Valnais. Létombe's succession to Valnais was established by September 7, 1781, at any rate, for under that date there is a memorandum of his being recognized by Congress as "consul general of France in the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, and Connecticut," and of his being requested to "immediately repair to the place of his destination" (*Secret Journals of Congress*, III:23). In the early part of 1783 he may have been absent from his post, for a notice of February 20, 1783, is signed at the office of the consul in Boston by "Toscan, Vice-consul of France" (*Independent Chronicle*), but if so he must have returned by autumn, when he wrote to Crèvecoeur from that city. Connecticut was withdrawn from his jurisdiction when Crèvecoeur's appointment was signed in June of the same year, but the other three states continued to be under his care. A second leave of absence in 1785-1786 came to an end with the arrival of the *Courrier de New York* July 20, 1786, bringing among other passengers, "Hon. Mr. Létombe, consul-general of France for the eastern states." Of Létombe's ability Crèvecoeur spoke in high terms, and his opinion was evidently shared by those in charge of foreign affairs, for the consul at Boston retained his post until the nineteenth of November, 1792, when all the French agents in the United States were recalled. In 1795 he was recognized by the President of the United States as consul general (see *Weekly Museum*, June 27, 1795).

Crèvecoeur Consul to New York, New Jersey and Connecticut
 Marbois Consul to Pennsylvania and Delaware
 d'Annemours ¹⁶ Consul to Maryland and Virginia
 Toscan ¹⁷ Vice-consul to Portsmouth in New Hampshire
 Marbois Vice-consul to Rhode Island
 Oster ¹⁸ Vice-consul to Richmond, Virginia
 Petry ¹⁹ Vice-consul to Wilmington, North Carolina

¹⁶ For d'Annemours, see page 218, note 4.

¹⁷ Jean Toscan went to America in the spring of 1781 as vice-consul of France at Boston. In 1783 he was still discharging that duty, but in January, 1784, he is described as vice-consul at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. His duties at Portsmouth were so light that Crèvecoeur wrote at the time when he wished to go to France on a leave of absence, suggesting that Toscan take his place at New York while he was gone. This arrangement was not made, however, but Toscan is referred to as vice-consul at Boston in Crèvecoeur's letters of 1784 and 1785. In 1790 Toscan was married at Portsmouth to Miss Elizabeth Parrot (*New York Journal*, Dec. 27, 1790).

¹⁸ Oster was vice-consul at Philadelphia at least as late as May 6, 1783 (see *Pennsylvania Packet* of that date). In 1784 he was transferred to Richmond. The *Secret Journals of Congress* (IV: 425-429, May 28, 1788) describe him as acting at Norfolk at that time.

¹⁹ Jean-Baptiste Petry, formerly a consular agent at Glasgow (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 182, note 1), seems to have been one of the ablest of the vice-consuls. When a commission of four was appointed in 1793 to represent the interests of the French republic in the United States, Petry was one of the number. Morris wrote to Washington at that time of Laforest and his friend "Petrie": "These two will undoubtedly draw together, and will probably sway the conduct of the commission: . . . and . . . being men of understanding will endeavor to keep things in a line of prudence and propriety"; (*American State Papers*, For. Aff., I:398). Crèvecoeur wrote (Dec. 2, 1793) that Laforest and Petry had gone back to America (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 182). Petry was later secretary of the United States legation, according to Robert de Crèvecoeur (p. 182). He may have been related to Edmund Petrie of Charleston, South Carolina, one of the addressers of Sir Henry Clinton in 1780, who suffered confiscation and banishment in 1782 (Sabine, *Loyalists*, II:565). Whether or not either is to be identified with "an American named 'Petrie'", whom Wharton describes as living in Paris in 1778 (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*,

Laforest ²⁰ Vice-consul to Savannah, Georgia

Laforest, although appointed as vice-consul, actually went to Charleston as consul and remained there until the appointment of Chateaufort, in 1785, as consul to North and South Carolina and Georgia.²¹

I:589), is uncertain. This "Petrie" got into trouble with William Lee, brother of the commissioner, and received a challenge from Lee, July 24, 1779. Petrie refused to retract the accusation which had led to the challenge, but for some reason the duel did not take place.

²⁰ Antoine-René-Charles-Mathurin de Laforest received his appointment in August, 1783. In 1784 (May 6th), Luzerne wrote to the president of Congress, "The king having as yet made no appointment to the consulate at Charleston, the intention of his Majesty was that M. de la Forest, Vice Consul at Savannah, should in the interim perform its duties" (*Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, XI:189). This he continued to do until the arrival of the Chevalier de Chateaufort at Charleston in June, 1785 (*New York Packet*, July 18, 1785). Soon after this time Laforest went north to assume the post of consul general, made vacant by the departure of Barbé-Marbois, and to discharge Crèvecoeur's duties during the latter's leave of absence in France. The headquarters of the consul general were transferred to New York, and Laforest took up his residence at 173 Queen Street (now Pearl). In the summer of 1787 (July), the daughter of M. de Beaumanoir, governor of the Hôtel des Invalides at Paris, came out to America under Crèvecoeur's escort to marry the consul general. As Mme. de Laforest she became well known to New York society. Laforest continued to discharge the duties of his office, at the request of the new minister Genet, even after the recall of the French agents in the United States in 1792. Affairs at Philadelphia, however, were left in the hands of François Dupont (brother-in-law of Brissot). In July, 1793, Laforest set sail for France, apparently in haste and expecting to return, for he left his family behind him. He was well received at Paris, where Crèvecoeur saw him, and was reinstated as consul general in the commission of four who were to represent the interests of France in the United States. These were to be Fauchet, the minister; Leblanc, secretary of legation; Laforest, consul general; and Petry, consul for the port of Philadelphia (see letter from Morris to Washington, *Amer. State Papers*, For. Aff., I:398).

²¹ *New York Packet*, July 18, 1785.

Not until November 4, 1780, did the United States bestir itself in the matter of consular appointments, when it created Colonel William Palfrey²² consul to France. Colonel Palfrey was lost at sea on the way to his post. When his death became known, Thomas Barclay was chosen to fill his place.²³ Vergennes objected to Barclay's title of consul; and not until October 3, 1782, did Franklin receive the latter's exequatur from the former. This was more than four years after Congress had recognized Gerard as consul general of France in the United States.²⁴ For several years Barclay represented the consular interests of the United States in France. His station seems to have been at Lorient, probably because that was the port of the newly-formed packet service between France and the United States. In 1786 Barclay was absent. A letter to Jefferson's secretary, William Short, asks, "What M. Jackson is this who is said by the papers to have arrived at L'Orient as Consul General &c. &c? if there is such a Gentleman, what is to become of M. Barclay when he returns, which in all probability if he's so active may be in the course of a year or so." ²⁵ Short replied somewhat sarcastically: ²⁶

"The M. Jackson whom you mention, I never heard of before & suppose he has been begotten in some London Garret. I think M. Barclay therefore will have nothing to fear at least from him — & as for his Aid de Camp I think he has little or nothing to fear or hope from anybody — You allow them two years to return in — their movements are out of my calculations altogether; for as M. B— offers his Services to go to Constantinople or anywhere else that his abilities may be

²² Paymaster general of the continental armies.

²³ He had been made vice-consul June 21, 1781 ("Early History of the U. S. Consular Service," *Polit. Sci. Qy.*, 1898, Vol. XIII, p. 27).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27, note.

²⁵ From William Smith, July 10, 1786; see Short Papers, Vol. 1, Library of Congress.

²⁶ Short Papers, Vol. 1, August 6, 1786.

useful, perhaps he may be engaged to pass the rest of his life in going about doing good. You know he has had the example of this set about 1786 years ago. I know not at what rate he travelled, but certain it is that M^r. B. ought to travel much faster since as there was no Post established in those days, the best of them were obliged to voyage about on mules & asses."

By 1788 the signing of the consular convention determined the duties and privileges of the consuls and vice-consuls in the two countries. From this time on references to other agents of the United States appear. In 1789 there is a mention of John Bondfield as an American agent at Bordeaux.²⁷ The following year James Fenwick, who was stationed at Bordeaux, sent his exequatur to Short (who was acting as chargé d'affaires), for his signature.²⁸ A week after Fenwick's letter, Short received a communication in regard to his exequatur from a M. Cathalan, who signed himself "vice consul of the United States at Marseilles."²⁹ De la Motte in the same year wrote from Havre,³⁰ signing himself "Vice Consul of the United States." Aaron Vail³¹ was consul at Lorient in 1792, at the time when John Fitch went to France to try to get help in his steam-boat experiments.³²

The consular agreement that had existed previous to the signing of the convention in 1788, took its origin in proceedings dating from 1779,³³ when the council of Massachusetts

²⁷ Short Papers, Vol. 5, October 19, 1789.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, Nov. 2, 1790.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, Nov. 9, 1790.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, Oct. 28, 1790.

³¹ Aaron Vail was a New York merchant who, for a short time in 1791, was connected with the packet-service. Persons wishing freight or passage were directed to apply to the captain on board at Moore's wharf, or to Aaron Vail at 156 Water Street, according to a notice in *The Mail*, July 5, 1791.

³² See p. 274.

³³ February 23, 1779.

Bay asked Congress "to state the powers which might be exercised by foreign consuls in American ports."³⁴ The marine committee, to whom it was referred, appointed a specific committee, June seventh, to "adjust and settle with the minister plenipotentiary of France, the powers and privileges of consuls in the ports of either nation."³⁵ Gerard acted promptly, and two weeks later he submitted to Congress a plan of a treaty which was referred to the special committee. Nothing further was done until two years later,³⁶ when Luzerne, who had succeeded Gerard, took up the matter and sent to Congress a draft of a consular agreement to be examined by Congress and the parts marked which admitted of no difficulty, the other parts to be submitted to the examination of delegates appointed by both parties. The matter was discussed and reported upon, and an agreement was finally reached January 25, 1782, when a scheme for the regulation of consular affairs, based upon Luzerne's draft, was presented to Congress by the committee to whom his plan had been submitted.³⁷ This form was practically the same as that submitted January second of the same year.³⁸ "I do myself the honor to enclose you a convention for the establishment of consuls," wrote Livingston to Franklin, January twenty-sixth, "which has just passed Congress. You are empowered either to sign it in France, or if any alterations are made, to send it here to be executed." Dissatisfaction with the convention arose soon after it had gone, and word was sent to Franklin to delay signing it until further instructions were received.³⁹

³⁴ "Early Consular Relations, etc.," p. 33.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ July 26, 1781, *Secret Journals of Congress*, III:1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, III:67-79.

³⁸ Given in *Secret Journals of Congress*, III:53-64.

³⁹ *Dip. Corr. Amer. Rev.*, ed. Sparks, III:294.

This order reached Paris too late to be acted upon, and the convention was consequently signed by Franklin and Vergennes, July 29, 1784, after they had made a number of modifications in the scheme.

Owing to the loss of the first copy of the convention, Congress did not receive the signed agreement until the summer of 1785. On the fourth of July, Jay, as secretary for foreign affairs, submitted to Congress a long report ⁴⁰ detailing the objectionable features of the draft of 1782 and of the newly-received modifications of 1784. If the form of 1784 had not contained material departures from the scheme of 1782, which had been sent to Dr. Franklin, Congress would have felt in duty bound to ratify it at once, in spite of their dissatisfaction with both instruments, but availing themselves of the loop-hole which the alterations of Franklin offered, they delayed action in spite of the urgency of the French minister. Jay's detailed objections are limited to points which are alterations in the scheme of 1782, since he felt that Congress had no case if they objected to what they had themselves agreed to formerly. The object of the convention, he said, was in general to provide against infraction of the French and American laws of trade; to prevent the people of one country from migrating to the other; and to establish in each other's country an influential corps of officers, under one chief, to promote mercantile and political views. Since no laws existed for the regulation of America's commerce with France, the first object of the convention was in the interest of France alone. Since Frenchmen came to America in numbers far exceeding that of Americans who went to France, the second object of the convention was of more consequence to France than to America. Since in France freedom of speech and the freedom of the press were so greatly restricted, American consuls would have little

⁴⁰ "Early Consular Relations, etc.," p. 34, note 3.

opportunity to exert commercial and political influence in behalf of their own country, while in America where speech was free, and the press open to all, French consuls might acquire great influence. Consequently the third aim of the convention was manifestly in the interest of France rather than of America. Congress, he maintained, had a right to decline to ratify the convention, since Franklin had exceeded his instruction by allowing changes to enter which altered the scheme of 1782 into a document which provided for the threefold aim which has been described; and yet, he concluded, as Congress had already gone so far, he was convinced that they ought to hold themselves ready to ratify an agreement which would conform to that of 1782, provided it omitted the objectionable features of the modification of 1784.⁴¹ Jay did not think that the interests of the United States would be served by a consular treaty, but believing that good faith with France required their ratification of their earlier agreement, he advocated its adoption with a saving clause which should limit its duration to eight or ten years.

The following year Jefferson received instructions to act upon Jay's recommendations,⁴² but as he also was convinced that the United States had nothing to gain by a consular treaty, he delayed informing the minister of his instructions. January 9, 1787, he wrote instead to Congress asking for "powers in which there shall be no reference to the scheme." This was granted, but he did not receive word of it until December 19, 1787. In the latter part of April, 1788, Jefferson sent to Montmorin, Vergennes' successor, a new agreement, limited to twelve years' duration, upon which, after long negotiations, the convention which was signed November 14, 1788, was based. The changes in form and

⁴¹ See *Secret Journals of Congress*, IV:132-181.

⁴² Jay's letter is dated Oct. 27, 1786.

substance from the two schemes of 1782 and 1784 were considerable.⁴³ Most of these aimed at giving the consuls and vice-consuls less power than the earlier agreements allowed them. It is noteworthy that the article in the document of 1782 which forbade consular representatives from engaging in trade, and also insisted upon their being subjects or citizens of the power appointing them,⁴⁴ is done away with in the revision of 1784 and in the scheme which Jefferson adopted in 1788. In speaking of the document framed by Jefferson in 1788, Jay declared:⁴⁵ "As the convention is free from several objections to which the one of 1784 was liable, and is in every respect preferable to it, and as it contains a clause limiting its duration to twelve years, it seems to follow as a necessary consequence, that the United States ought to ratify it." This was done four days later, April 14, 1792, when the "act concerning consuls and vice-consuls" was enacted "for carrying into full effect the convention between the king of the French and the United States of America, entered into for the purpose of defining and establishing the functions and privileges of their respective consuls and vice-consuls."⁴⁶

Crèvecoeur's term of service coincided with this period of unsettled conditions in consular affairs, and uncertainty in respect to the exact definition of the consuls' duties. The task he set himself was to promote union between his own country and the new republic by disseminating information of a practical nature which he thought might be of use to one or the other; by maintaining communication between the two countries through the packet service; by sending to France a series of statements in regard to American

⁴³ See the *Gazette of the United States*, April 10, 1790.

⁴⁴ Article III.

⁴⁵ July 29, 1789; see "Early Consular Relations, etc.," p. 8.

⁴⁶ "Early Consular Relations, etc.," p. 40.

imports, accompanied by samples and suggestions of ways in which French manufactures and commodities might enter into competition with those of England; by pressure upon the French government to make an opening in return for the introduction of American products into France. The means which he employed toward this four-fold aim have been discussed in the chapters preceding; the present one is devoted chiefly to his efforts on behalf of French trade, since the most immediate and obvious duty of a consul is the care of the business interests of the country by which he is appointed.

At the close of the Revolution the Americans were largely dependent upon other nations for their manufactures; even as late as March, 1785, Crèvecoeur wrote that American purchasers needed manufactures of all kinds, because the high cost of labor prevented them from making these things for themselves. Before the war England had supplied the colonists with most of the manufactures they needed and in return had helped herself to their raw products. It seems as though the rupture between England and her colonies might have led to a corresponding break in their commercial relations, but these were re-established firmly at the time of the peace and continued without interruption for many years. Chief among the reasons for this was the excellence of the articles sent, and the intelligence with which English exporters studied their market. The fact also that the Americans had become used to English wares must be considered, as well as the element of the common language which made business relations easier between them than between America and any other nation.

But Crèvecoeur felt that the return of prosperity to America, the rebuilding of the homes that had been shattered during the war, the restoration of the towns and cities, offered France an opportunity to enter into competition

with England in supplying the citizens of the new republic with what they needed in this rejuvenation. Here is where his emphasis was laid. Hitherto France had sent only objects of trifling importance or mere luxuries. Let her now send objects of primary importance. Among these useful articles he specifies ironware, nails (he speaks of sending samples of thirty-two different kinds used by the Americans), tools, sheet-lead, window-glass, paint, crockery, brooms, copper utensils, woolen cloth, sail-cloth, rope, anchors, leather goods, writing paper, drugs and medicines. Of the various articles referred to as desirable for France to send to America, none are spoken of more often nor with greater emphasis than window-glass and nails. "Would you believe it," he exclaimed to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, "England sends glass every year to the value of more than four million livres tournois? But if you stop to consider," he added, "that everything here is built of wood, that a third of their wall-space is given up to windows, that even their country churches often contain from 1400 to 2000 panes, that building goes on every day, and breakage too, you will realize the enormous amount of this article that is used. As for nails, that is even more extraordinary; from the hulls of their ships to the roofs of their houses, everything is fashioned and fastened together with nails."⁴⁷ Another important item is paper for writing or printing. The European, who thinks of America as a new country where printing is little known and writing little done, would be surprised, he says, at the amount of paper used here. Newspapers (more than 135 dailies), acts of Congress, the correspondence of the representatives, the laws of the legislative assemblies, business transactions of various kinds, ledgers, lawyers' briefs, personal correspondence, books, almanacs and maps, altogether require a great quantity

⁴⁷ Letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Nov. 5, 1784.

of paper, which France ought to help supply, for French paper is better in quality than English paper, although not so white. Once the art of properly bleaching it is learned, this ought to be a source of great profit to the French paper-makers.⁴⁸ It is strange, he continues, that France makes no attempt to supply the United States with drugs or medicines of any kind, because there is no nation in the world which, in proportion to its population, uses so much medicine as the Americans do.⁴⁹ His recommendation of the export of paint is often repeated, accompanied by warnings against the inferior quality which has been sent in the past. These, unfortunately, were not heeded, and in March, 1785, he rails against the miserable stuff the packets have brought over, and the wretched manner in which the ships have been painted. Finally, he declares, he had the bow and stern of one of the packets repainted properly, as an object-lesson, so as to show the management at Lorient that they were nothing but robbers and boobies ("des Pillars et des Ignorants").⁵⁰ The importance of all these recommendations, he says, can be seen from the fact that England receives annually from the Americans for the sale of window-glass, drinking-glasses, nails, paper, paint, sail-cloth and brandy, more than six million livres tournois.⁵¹

At the outset a difficulty presented itself: France was not proficient in the manufacture of most of these articles. It would be necessary for the nation to send itself to school to the English in order to learn how to make these things properly. This could be accomplished partly by careful examination of the samples which he sent to the ministry.

⁴⁸ Report sent to the Maréchal de Castries, March 1, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Letter to the Duke, Nov. 5, 1784.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

An office at Paris ("bureau des lumières"), to which information of all kinds relating to manufactures could be sent, was proposed by him in 1785, and he himself, he suggested, could accomplish a good deal if leave of absence were granted to him to return to France and go about among French manufacturers and inform them of the processes and devices that had come to his attention. Furthermore, the government might help the situation by offering inducements to manufacturers to experiment in these various lines, so covering the possibility of loss which might result from their attempts. This was not a fantastic idea. In England iron manufactures at this time were under the protection of the government, which directed the industry through a board presided over by a very skilful German metallurgist. All this was of the utmost importance, he maintained, for as long as French wares continued inferior to English wares, the Americans naturally could not be expected to buy them; consequently French exporters would lose their money as well as their pains. French merchants grumbled already at the loss they met with in their American trade, with good reason, he says, considering how their business was conducted. First of all they sent only such things as were beyond the requirements and often beyond the purchasing power of the ordinary buyer, and then sent only left-over articles for which they could not find a market at home. These wares comprised chiefly such things as jewelry, gauze, silk, laces, ribbons, and other accessories of dress. This meant not only that the goods themselves often remained unsold, but also that they cast discredit upon French manufactures in general.

To one other import, French wines, he gave, as has been said, special attention. Before the Revolution there had been little demand for French wine. Claret was almost the only kind imported, and that only in small quanti-

ties.⁵² This was due chiefly to the high price it commanded from being imported by way of England, also to the fact that the American people in general preferred white wine to red. The opening of intercourse with France during the war altered the taste of the people somewhat, and led many people to prefer French wines to the kinds they had formerly used. This offered an opportunity to French exporters which Crèvecoeur was anxious to have seized. He urged, however, that only the best kinds be sent, and always in bottles. The export duty (equal in 1784 to one-third of the first price) and the transportation charges also needed to be lowered in order to bring the price within reach of the American buyer. The government, he felt, could well afford to lower the rate charged by the packet-ships for carrying French wines, and could be of further assistance by establishing a national wine-cellar at New York, where wines brought over in bottles could be stored during the season of severe cold, and where wine brought in casks could be transferred to bottles. The suggestion in regard to a national wine-cellar, he says, he owes to William Seton. He recurs to it often during his correspondence with the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, and seems to have become more and more convinced that the success of the wine trade in America depended upon it. The energy with which Crèvecoeur urged the development of this branch of French trade can be seen from the following excerpt from an undated letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, belonging probably to January, 1784: ⁵³

"In consequence of M^r W^m Seton's Proposals of a National Cellar (the sign of which I wou'd have Painted & called: La Bonne Foy)

⁵² See a letter from William Seton to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, January 6, 1784, in the Library at Mantes, in which he gives a short account of the trade in French wines, in which he had been interested for eighteen years.

⁵³ In the Library at Mantes.

I w'd think it Proper to give order, that several sorts of wines shou'd be sent in Bottles to Lorient with their Lowest Prices & their age. I make no doubt, I shou'd in a little time, by the help of my Friends, promote their sale & make them known; among these wines I wou'd wish to have 500 botles of Cahusac, 100 of the true & genuine *Vin de Grave*, which the good Americans want to know above all others — M^r Seton's great popularity, & my Zeal, wou'd, I am morally sure, spread the Knowledge of these Wines, & Procure Large orders — this first Invoice wou'd be paid 6 months after their being ship'd for New York — I have or rather M^r Seton & I, we have a good celar in our [illegible], & should thank Your Grace to procure me every Direction for the Botling & the preservation of wines in cellars — I hope your Grace will approve the Idea of a National Celar, kept by a Man Incapable of deceiving, *such as my Friend*, where the Public wou'd be sure of having, at cheap rate, the best Liquors of their kind — this is the only Rule of conduct which can [bring] our wines & B[r]andys into any Degree of Reputation — I have Just bought 48 botles of Brandy from Capt Daboville⁵⁴ of Excellent Brandy, which I have given among my Friends & all of them want to get some of y^e same, so that your Grace may see that I am Like to succeed in this first Trial — Good Faith in its Quality, & age, the knowledge of y^e Lowest Prices will Insure a considerable Demand."

An important point to be remembered in regard to trade between the two countries, he reminded the ministry, was that a one-sided commerce would eventually languish. If the ports of France itself, he said, could not be made free to American products, the French government might at least open certain of the ports in the French Indies. One of the most important articles of export from America — tobacco — would naturally not be sent to France, where no one but the agents of the farmers general were allowed to import it; but there were other things which the French might use, and they should remember that, if they took nothing from the Americans, these in turn would end by taking nothing from the French. Among the articles which France might import to advantage he mentioned wool from

⁵⁴ D'Aboville, captain of the French packet *Courrier de l'Amérique*.

Massachusetts, especially that from Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and Elizabeth Island. This, while shorter than English wool, was very fine and soft. Massachusetts, he said, produced from three to four hundred thousand pounds yearly. French manufacturers would profit by importing this wool and returning it to America in the form of cloth of a good quality and a good color. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey had made a great quantity of excellent cheese before the war. This grade could be used by the French navy, and would be found a great improvement on the dry, miserable cheese in use at that time. Whale-oil and soda were other commodities for which France could find use. The only manufactured article whose importation into France he recommended was a two-seated wagon, which he describes as "neat, elegant, light and strong."

"They have [a] spring seat & can carry 6 persons by means of 2 Horses, they are a simple and very usefull vehicle, wherein the father, mother & the Children can all be transported. I wish I knew who wou'd want this American carriage which I am sure wou'd be much admired — the harness, equally simple wou'd be wanted also; I believe the whole outfit handsomely painted wou'd cost about 400 [livres] tournois, for the Honor of American Genius I cou'd sincerely wish to receive orders for the construction of one of these waggons: They never over-set, be the roads ever so bad. — here they serve on a Sunday to go to church & the week for farming uses — I think that in point of every utility they are the most commodious vehicles ever Invented." ⁵⁵

There was one respect in which Crèvecoeur believed the Americans superior to all other nations of the time — that was in the art of ship-building. In this they surpassed even their former masters the English. Less than six months after his arrival at his post, he began trying to persuade the French government to order a packet built by

⁵⁵ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, Jan. 6, 1784; in the Library at Mantes.

the famous Boston ship-wright, John Peck. The account of his efforts and their final success is given in Chapter VIII⁵⁶ and Chapter XI.⁵⁷ One reason for the success of the American ship-builders was the excellent material they used. Crèvecoeur, as we have seen, suggested that the French government make an effort to obtain some of this lumber, but opposition to the plan seems to have arisen at once at Lorient, at Brest, and even at Paris itself. The American wood was not suited to the purpose, the objectors informed the Maréchal de Castries, and so the government continued to look to Russia and the shores of the Baltic, as in the past, to supply the royal ship-yards. Crèvecoeur reopened the matter early in 1785. "Ask the gentlemen who are conducting the affairs of the marine," he wrote to the Maréchal, "what was the only ship that was not dismasted lately in coming out of Boston harbor, and they will tell you that it was the *Gloire* which had American masts. White pine from Penobscot," he continued, "is more durable than wood now being used in Europe, whether for masts, planks or boards. The Philadelphia shipwrights use it for the hulls of their ships and it lasts as long as oak."⁵⁸ In order that the French government might satisfy itself on this subject, he advocated the sending of a ship secretly to America from Nantes, under the command of a reliable merchant. The ship was to proceed to Charleston and there take on board an American pilot, American wood-cutters and stevedores, and then sail south as far as St. Mary's Bay in Georgia. This was a spot where the best live-oak could be procured. The virtues of the Georgia live-oak were so well-recognized in America that at Philadelphia one of the ship-yards used

⁵⁶ Pages 128, 131-133.

⁵⁷ Pages 197-198, and note 99.

⁵⁸ Letter from Crèvecoeur to the Maréchal de Castries, March 1, 1785; in the Library at Mantes.

nothing else. It was from St. Mary's Bay that the English, before the Revolution and even during the war, took what they needed for the construction of their own ships — answer enough to the detractors in France. The French ship in two months' time could take on her cargo and return to France. He recommended further that on its return a frigate should be built with the wood thus obtained, using live-oak for the hull, red cedar from South Carolina (which could be obtained at the same time) for the upper part of the ship, and white Penobscot pine for the masts. A vessel could thus be launched from the ship-yard at Nantes that would be "immortal," that is to say it would last for more than sixty years. So convinced was he of the merits of his project, that he even thought seriously of loading a ship on his own responsibility with live-oak, and sending it to Nantes for the experiment he proposed. He was afraid, however, that he would be thought too precipitous if he did this, so he gave it up. When the French contractors continued their objections, he altered his plan and proposed that the wood should be sent to France in an American ship, which could afterwards return to America with a European cargo. Marbois, the consul-general, approved of Crèvecoeur's plan, but suggested that the wood could be carried to France by the ships of the French navy, so as to avoid the necessity for paying freight. The difficulty of navigation along a dangerous and little-known coast, however, offset this advantage, Crèvecoeur believed, and the possible loss of one ship was more to be considered than the possible saving they might make.

How many of the consul's suggestions bore fruit I do not know. In the matter of the material for ship-building he had heavy opposition to face from the self-interested contractors, who prevented his ideas from receiving the attention they deserved. In December, 1784, he wrote to the Duke de la

Rochefoucauld: "I am sending two ribs ("courbes") of white swamp oak by the packet, but they will burn them at Lorient; they are already cursing me because of the new packet-boat" (the *Maréchal de Castries*, which was launched in 1786). Earlier in the same month he wrote that he was delighted that the minister had expressed his approval of the scheme in regard to the exportation of Massachusetts wool. And in the same letter he says the minister approved of his plan for the extension of the fur-trade on the 42nd parallel. The Duke de la Rochefoucauld and the Count de Jarnac both responded to the appeal for French wine and brandy, and sent a considerable quantity during the first two years of his consulship. The Americans, too, awoke to the possibilities which the new era seemed to open. The packet service promised well, Crèvecoeur's enthusiasm was contagious, the *Courrier de l'Amérique*, the second of the packets to sail from New York to France, in January, 1784, carried a large amount of freight.

By March, however, Crèvecoeur began to grow discouraged. He wrote to the Duke that, although he felt he had in some measure succeeded in what he had attempted — the promotion of a stronger union between the two countries, and an addition to the respect of the Americans for France — the uncommon length and severity of the winter had prevented him from doing much as a consul. He went on to say that he began to doubt the probability of any extensive trade being established between France and the United States. In the course of various letters the reasons for this appear, one of these being the ups and downs of the packet service, which finally discouraged merchants in both countries from engaging in large commercial enterprises with the help of these vessels. The character of the French merchants in America was another reason for the lack of confidence in French wares. "What a pity,"

he exclaimed, "that among the French now living here, there is not a single respectable individual!" This may have been exaggeration, but if it were even half true it would explain the lack of success on the part of French trade. The high rate on freight was another deterrent factor, but the greatest check which French-American trade met with was in the poor quality of the exports from France. That America was also sometimes careless in this respect, may be seen from Crèvecoeur's letter to Governor Bowdoin in July, 1786.⁵⁹ "Generally speaking," he wrote to the Duke, "there is a marked inferiority in everything which comes here from France; goods are carelessly consigned, badly made, and of poor quality."⁶⁰ This continued to be true until the time of his return to France in 1785, and although he did not cease sending recommendations up to the time of his departure, he felt that there was little hope for improvement until he could go himself to France and present the matter in person to the French manufacturers. During his two years' leave of absence he busied himself on behalf of French-American commerce untiringly, and upon his return, therefore, he might have expected to find a marked improvement. Unfortunately, however, several things occurred to mar this success: the Maréchal de Castries, who had known and respected Crèvecoeur and listened to many of his suggestions, retired; the packet service began to wane; and France herself was soon too much occupied with the situation at home to interest herself very deeply in foreign commerce.

One of the most illuminating documents on the subject of French-American trade in the years immediately following the American Revolution is the communication from Crèvecoeur to which reference has several times been made in

⁵⁹ *Proceedings, Massachusetts Historical Society*, XIII:237.

⁶⁰ March 25, 1784.

this chapter. It is appended here for that reason, although, owing to the circumstances which have just been recapitulated, it must stand as a monument in a lost cause.

New York 1^e mars 1785

"Idées que je crois utiles et que pour cette raison Je prends la liberté de communiquer à Monseigneur le Maréchal de Castries

L'Etat actuel des liaisons de commerce entre la France et Les Etats unis doit naturellement inspirer une foule d'idées à tout homme qui s'intéresse vivement à la prospérité réciproque des deux Pays, mais réunir tous les objets que cette double considération présente, en comparer les differens points de vûe, et déduire des consequences Justes et importantes, seroit une entreprise au dessus de mes forces; et d'ailleurs mon dessein n'est point d'établir un Système, mais seulement de mettre au Jour des reflexions qui sont le fruit de l'envie que J'ay d'être utile à ma patrie et au pays pour lequel elle s'est vivement intéressée.

Quoiqu'intimement persuadé de ma foiblesse, l'amour du bien public me la fait oublier, et ma qualité de consul n'est pas le seul motif qui m'engage à écrire. Je prens donc, Monseigneur la liberté de vous faire part de mes idées telles que Je les ai conçues, persuadé que si quelques unes vous paroissent Justes, vous serez naturellement porté à les faire fructifier.

Pour guérir un grand mal, il faut remonter à la source; L'on est obligé de convenir que le commerce de la France avec les Etats unis a un grand besoin pour se soutenir, d'une Base plus solide que celle sur laquelle il subsiste aujourd'hui, qu'il a besoin de beaucoup d'encouragement et de nouvelles lumières, tant par rapport à la nature qu'à la qualité et la façon des objets dont l'importation est necessaire à ce pays-cy. Les anglois ont fait gouter les manières de leur pays aux Americains, et nous sommes actuellement obligés de nous y conformer si nous voulons partager ce commerce avec eux.

L'infériorité de nos marchandises n'est malheureuse^t que trop connue, Jay vu et examiné celles que la France a fournies ici depuis plusieurs années: leur imperfection est frappante pour tous ceux qui ont vu les mêmes articles façonnés en Angleterre. Il faut avouer de plus que les commerçans françois par une politique malentendu n'ont guère envoyé ici Jusqu'à présent que les rebuts de leurs magasins sans faire attention à la mauvaise opinion qu'ils donneroient de nos marchandises, et combien il seroit difficile de détromper par la suite les Américains.

Si nous l'importons en quelques articles, ces articles sont malheureusement frivoles, inutiles et même dangereux puisqu'ils ne servent qu'à nourrir le luxe, qui s'introduit de plus en plus, et qui semble conduire à l'aneantissement du commerce qu'on s'efforce d'établir. En effet les importations de nos objets futiles tendent à ruiner ce pays et des loix somptuaires peuvent d'ailleurs enlever à la France ce foible avantage.

Nos commerçans se plaignent, je n'en suis point étonné, du commerce des Etats unis. Je suppose deux négocians, l'un anglois, l'autre françois établir dans un de ces Etats; que verrons nous dans le magasin du premier, des choses solides et d'une nécessité absolue, bonnes et parfaites dans leur genre. On remarquera qu'elles ont été envoyées d'après la connoissance des besoins du pays; rien ne s'y fera remarquer par son extrême beauté; rien ne s'y fera mépriser par trop d'imperfection. les prix ne rebuteront l'acheteur, et la mauvaise qualité des marchandises ne l'éloignera point. Tout est proportionné à ses facultés, et les objets d'un luxe exorbitant en son généralement bannis.

Le magasin du second, (du moins pour l'ordinaire) sera composé de Gases, de dentelles, de fleurs, de soyeries, &^a. Est-il donc étonnant que ce dernier se plaigne, tandis que le

premier non seulement se soutient, mais profite considerablement. L'acheteur avec des facultés médiocres est obligé de renoncer au luxe, mais il ne peut se priver des objets de première nécessité, et surtout l'acheteur américain qui dans ce moment manque de manufactures de toute espèce et que la cherté de la main d'oeuvre lui empêche encore d'établir.

Je connois une foule d'articles essentiellement utiles qu'il est étonnant que les françois n'ayent point encore introduits ici. C'est donc, Jose le dire, dans ce moment que la nation a besoin d'être instruite sur les objets qu'elle doit importer et éclairée sur la forme que doivent avoir ces mêmes objets. Je crois qu'il en est en effet auxquels Les negotians françois n'ont Jamais songé, tels que, verries, fayanceries, Quincailleries, carraux de vitres, clouds de toutes espèces, papier à écrire, Brosses à Blanchir, Plomb laminé et à tirer, glaces, Miroirs, Papiers peints, fer en tôle, Pierres à éguiser, hameçons, couleurs, &^a. La consommation de ces differents articles et de mille autres que peut fournir la france qui sont tous de nécessité première, est immense dans ces Etats. La grande population, les Emigrations qui occasionnent sans cesse de nouveaux Etablissemens, augmentent chaque Jour les demandes et les Anglois semblent avoir acquis le privilege exclusif de satisfaire tous ces premiers besoins.

Je ne sais pourquoi le françois semble effrayé lorsqu'il luy faut faire un envoy de Marchandises de grand encombrement ou qui demandent la perfection de l'Emballage. Le verre, la fayence et autres choses casuelles demandent, J'en conviens, non seulement beaucoup d'art pour les arrimer, mais en recompense, cela une fois bien fait, on n'a point à craindre les avaries qui arrivent si facilement à nos petits emballages de gases, de dentelles, Soyeries, &^a. qui souffrent de la moindre humidité. Les peintures ne demandent pas moins de

précautions pour ne point se répandre et les articles de Quincailleries les préserver de la rouille.

Quel est l'homme qui en voyageant ici n'a pas été étonné du luxe avec lequel on batit, en croisées et en peintures de toutes espèces, couleurs et qualités. J'ay vu plusieurs Eglises de campagnes où il y avoit 1400 à 2000 caraux aux fenêtres et pour plus de soixante louïs de peintures, serrures. J'aime à croire que peut être en communicant quelques lumières à nos ouvriers et quelques échantillons nous pouvons fournir à aussi bon compte que les anglois tous ces articles; celui du verre en particulier rien de plus simple que de le perfectionner.

Par rapport a la Quincaillerie, Je ne puis qu'avouer notre inferiorité, mais pourquoi par Exemple ne ferions nous de moins pas d'aussi bons *clouds* que les Anglois, d'un fer aussi durable et aussi bien allongés. Cette branche de la Quincaillerie qui pourroit d'abord paroître de peu de conséquence, mérite cependant d'être considerée, si l'on fait attention au grand nombre qu'exige la bâtisse des maisons qu'on ne couvrent qu'en essentes et dont tous les planchers sont parquetés. La construction des vaisseaux qui augmente tous les Jours &^a. — il arrive des vaisseaux d'Angleterre entièrement fretés de carraux et de clouds.

L'usage de la vaisselle d'Etain n'ayans presque point lieu ici, pourquoi les français n'y importerait-ils point la fayence faite suivant le goût anglois, dont les demandes se renouvellent chaque Jours, il est de fait que la consommation des differens articles dont Je viens de parler, se monte même actuellement à plus de trois millions tournois. Que sera-ce donc dans dix ans d'ici.

Desirant, Monseigneur, contribuer de tout mon pouvoir à donner à notre commerce plus d'effort, et à nos manufactures plus de lumières et d'Emulation, J'ay soigneusement ramassé des Echantillons de carraux de toutes dimensions,

de 7 par 9, de 8 par 10, de 11 par 13, ainsi que des clous et de bien d'autres articles. Ils sont emballés dans des Boettes, avec les prix originaire et celui auquel elles se vendent ici.

J'ay également raceuilli des modèles de clouds propres à la Bat ⁶¹ des maisons et a la construction des vaisseaux, avec leur poid et leur prix.

Pourquoi n'imiterions nous pas ces articles, par rapport à leurs qualités et à leurs dimensions. Cela me paroît d'une si grande conséquence qu'il seroit à souhaiter que ces utiles leçons fussent propagés le plutôt possible et que le gouvernement voulut pendant quelques années donner une petite gratification à la sortie du Royaume à ceux qui imiteroient les modèles qu'on leur presenteroit. Ces gratifications seroient même d'une nécessité absolue pour qu'ils pussent descendre aux prix des anglois.

Pourquoi les françois ne fourniroient ils aux américains le Brun d'Espagne, l'ocre Jaune, le verd de gris, le Blanc de Ceruse et toutes autres couleurs dont on se sert ici pour les vaisseaux et pour les maisons, pourquoi dis-je ne les fourniroient-ils pas d'aussi bonne qualité et à aussi bon compte que les Anglois. Rien ne me semble plus aisé, pourvu que le gouvernement veule faire communiquer des lumières aux manufactures et les encourager.

Pourquoi n'imiterions nous pas aussi le nombre infini de Peinceaux, de Brosses de toutes espèces, dont la propreté des maisons et des vaisseaux fait faire une si grande consommation.

Pourquoi, en fait de cordages, de cables, de toiles à voiles, d'ancres de toutes les dimensions, ne verroit-on Jamais rien venir de france ici. Personne ne disconviendra cependant que ces articles ne soient d'un usage immense dans un pays ou la moitié des richesses est employée sur la mer. Pourquoi ne pas faire gouter et préférer nos toiles. Cette Branche

⁶¹ A lapse on the part of the original writer, or else of the copyist

de commerce l'emporteroit de beaucoup cependant sur nos soyeries, nos dentelles, nos rubons &^a dont on inonde ce Pays.

Il est important que les fabricans françois recoivent les lumières dont ils ont besoin pour développer leur industrie, mais ces soins deviendroient infructueux, si le gouvernement n'y met la dernière main en favorisant les manufactures qui montreroient le plus de zèle à faire ces premiers essais.

Tout me confirme que nos négocians languissent dans une indolence ou dans une ignorance qui m'étonnent également. Il est de fait que pendant la guerre, il est venu d'Hollande des marchandises françoise à *20 pour cent* meilleur marché que de france même.

Nous n'avons point dans nos manières de ployer, de timbrer, de marquer, cette simeterie qui plait à l'oeil et qui donne du relief à la marchandise la plus grossière. Un grand nombre de nos commerçans Icy savent à peine écrire. Ils nont point en général cet usage des grandes affaires et ils se livrent à un trop grand luxe.

Le grand crédit donné par les anglois a causé une espèce de frénésie qui ne durera pas longtems; bientôt les repentirs mutuels remettront les choses dans leur Etat naturel. Il seroit à souhaiter que dans cette espèce de renouement de commerce, des françois instruits vinsent ici montrer et faire goûter des Echantillons de nos manufactures, ou que si on ne pouvoit les y engager on persuadât à des Jeunes gens d'ici d'aller passer un an en france y étudier ce qui ne peut convenir à ce pays-ci, y en introduire les goûts et apprendre à en tirer dans la suite ce qui leur paroitrait avantageux. Actuellement ce sont les Marchandres de Londres qui importent de france ici tout ce qui leur promet quelque Bénéfice et qui nous enlèvent ainsi celui de l'exportation; qui le croiroit. J'ai raisonné plusieurs fois de cela avec mes amis; tous me disent qu'ils n'y a point de vaisseaux venant directement de la Manche ici, que les anglois leur fournissent nos mar-

chandises à crédit, et qu'en faisant ainsi le commerce interlope, ils se mettent à l'abri des fraudes auxquels plusieurs ont été exposés.

Un des principaux inconvenients de la Malhonnêteté de certains françois qui résident ici est par rapport aux capitaines de nos navires Marchands qui y abordent. Ces capitaines peu instruits et souvent de mauvaise conduite, ne cherchent à leur arrivée d'autres connoissances que parmi leur compatriotes dont un grand nombre ne mènent eux-mêmes une conduite régulière, sont sans capacité, sans liaisons et ne peuvent par conséquent que leur faire faire de mauvaises affaires. Si d'ailleurs ils ne les trompent pas, et ne leur procurent point de reussites à dessein d'en profiter; de plus ces capitaines abusent souvent dans les ports des intérêts de leurs armateurs et les sacrifient au Jeu, au Bombances [?] et aux plaisirs qui les retiennent dans les Villes plus longtems qu'ils ne deveroient y rester.

Ce sont les françois eux-mêmes qui décrient leurs consuls dans l'esprit des américains qui ignorant les Justes bornes de la Juridiction consulaire ajoutent foy à ce que ces premiers peuvent leur dire, qui, quand on veut reprimer leur licence ne cessent de répéter aux derniers que l'Etablissement consulaire n'a d'autre but que d'établir la domination françoise en Amérique. Quoiqu'ils ne parviennent pas à persuader la partie gouvernante, ils ne laissent cependant, pas de gêner bien de bons esprits. Il n'y a pas Jusqu'aux Gasettes qui ne soient devenues les organes de leurs satires contre des personnes dont le Gouvernement Justifie la conduite.

Nos vins et nos eaux-de-vie arrivent souvent ici dans toutes les saisons et ordinairement après avoir passer par les Isles. Les propriétaires n'ayant point ici de caveaux convenables, ils deviennent d'une mauvaise qualité, s'aigrissent et l'américains une fois trompé retourne aux vins de Porto, de Madeire et de Lisbonne.

Tels sont en abrégé les inconveniens qui s'opposent à l'agrandissement de notre commerce et même à son maintien avec l'Amérique septentrionale. Si d'un côté nos manufactures ont des infériorités avec celles de l'Angleterre, d'un autre nous ne savons point tirer parti des objets qui sont totalement à notre avantage, et des individus d'une mauvaise conduite, ternissent en émigrant, notre réputation.

Je dois cependant rendre Justice à quelques membres et il n'est pas, Je crois de consul qui ne puisse nommer des hommes qui font honneur à leur nation, mais ils émigrent en trop petit nombre pour contrebalancer le deshonneur dont les autres la couvrent.

LISTE DES OBJETS QUE LA FRANCE PEUT EXPORTER AVANTAGEUSEMENT EN AMERIQUE

POUDRE À CANON

C'est un fait bien connu de tout le continent et des sauvages même que la poudre à canon françoise est meilleur et moins chère que celle qu'on fabrique en Angleterre. Il seroit donc on ne peut plus avantageux d'en établir des Entrepôts, non seulement à New-York, mais aussi dans la Caroline et surtout en Virginie dont la ville d'Alexandrie est destinée à Jouir un Jour d'une grande partie du commerce des Pelleteries. Pourquoi les Etats unis ne tireroient-ils pas de France toutes les poudres dont ils ont besoin.

N.B. il est plusieurs articles propres à ce commerce avec les sauvages que l'on peut tirer de France. Il seroit d'une grande utilité que quelques Canadiens bien instruits fussent sur ce sujet consultes, comme sur un objet d'une grande importance: *Pour encourager l'envoy des pelleteries en France, il seroit je crois nécessaire d'établir que toutes celles qui passeroient par les Paquebots ne payeroient qu'un demi-fret ou point du tout.*

Dans l'Idée que Je pris la liberté de vous donner sur l'Eta- blissement des cavaux nationaux, Je pris aussi celle, Monseigneur, de vous demander que toutes les liqueurs qu'on enverroit de France en Bouteilles par les mêmes vais- seaux ne payassent également qu'un demi fret, ce qui auroit ce me semble des conséquences bien avantageuses. 1°, on ne met d'ordinaire en bouteilles que ce qu'il y a de meilleur, 2°, les liqueurs se conserveroient mieux, 3°, cela encou- rageroit les manufactures de Bouteilles dont la consommation en Angleterre est immense par la grande quantité de Bière et particulièrement de *Porter* qu'on en exporte.

Je ne puis que donner que des idées générales au sujet du commerce des Pelleteries, mais comme la cession du Niagara va en changer le cours, il me paroît de la plus grande con- séquence que cet objet en devienne une des speculations les plus réfléchies et les plus sages. New-York l'emportera sur Montreal, si on s'y prend bien, c'est à dire si on choisit pour traiter avec les sauvages des marchands au fait, munis d'objets convenables et si on prend les precautions néces- saires pour faciliter leurs retours. Comme il n'y a point de François vraiment au fait de ces traites, il vaudroit mieux ce me semble s'adresser a des maisons américaines et cana- diennes du détroit. L'article des poudres et eaux-de-vie, Je le repète, seroient des plus avantageux pour traiter avec les sauvages.

PAPIERS À ÉCRIRE

La consommation des papiers ici est plus considérable que ne peuvent se l'imaginer en Europe ceux qui ne considèrent l'Amérique septentrionale que comme un pays neuf où l'imprimerie est peu connu et les écritures peu communes. Cependant l'on peut dire qu'il n'y en a point qui a popula- tion égale consomment annuellement autant de papier que les Etats unis. Le grand nombre de Gasettes qui s'y publient

et qu'on prétend être de 153 par jour pendant toute l'année, les actes du Congrès, l'immense correspondance de ce corps avec les differens Etats, les loix qui publient chaque Jour les assemblées législatives, les Ecritures des commerçans qui composent la plus grande partie des citoyens, les livres dont ils ont besoin, les écoles d'écritures qui sont en grand nombre, les lettres qui s'écrivent ordinairement sur grand papier, les procédures qui [?] suscitent les affaires de commerce, les Etudes de notaires, enfin les livres, les almanacs et même les cartes qui s'impriment et se publient tous les jours, sont autant de débouchés pour nos papiers. Cette Branche de Commerce est sans doute digne de l'attention du Gouvernement. Je croirois donc que rien ne seroit plus instructif et plus avantageux pour la France que de lui apprendre au moyen d'Echantillons les espèces de papier qu'elle doit importer et la forme qui convient aux livres dont on se sert dans les comptoirs. Le papier françois est naturellement meilleur que l'anglois, mais il est moins blanc; l'usage et l'habitude ont accoutumé les Américains au papier d'Angleterre ainsi qu'à tous les autres produits de ce pays. Il faut avec de l'industrie et de la persévérance les imiter et les surpasser en bon marché. Plusieurs imprimeurs m'ont beaucoup parlé à ce sujet, sur lequel Je ne pouvois entièrement les satisfaire. J'en reviens seulement à penser qu'avec des Echantillons et la protection du gouvernement on parviendroit dans peu à fournir une partie du papier et des livres de comptoir dont se servent les américains à meilleur marché que les anglois.

GROS OUTILS EN FER PLAT

Pourquoi les françois ne apprendroient-ils pas à laminer le fer comme le font les Anglois et à faire des scies, des pelles, des bèches, &^a. d'une forme aussi convenable et d'une trempe aussi bonne. C'est toujours un spectacle douloureux

pour moi, quand J'entre dans un magasin d'y voir des instrumens de toute espèce leurs venants d'Angleterre. Il ne faudroit pour réussir à imiter les Anglois qu'un seul homme au fait de ces matières, protégé du gouvernement et Jouissant de quelques petites immunités, qui voulut entreprendre d'imiter les Echantillons que Je lui ferois passer avec les prix de la fabrique angloise et ceux de la vente ici. Toutes simples que paroissent ces idees, elles n'en ont pas moins un mérite que Justifieroit leur exécution; mais pour en être intimement persuadé il faut connoitre le Pays et avoir été ainsi que moi témoin oculaire du grand débit qui se fait dans les campagnes, des differens outils nécessaires à la culture des terres, ou au travail des bois. Presque tous les outils que Jay vu en france sont bien inférieure à ceux d'ici. Tout mon zèle tombe principalement sur les objets utiles et de première nécessité. Le gratifications que J'oserois demander sont absolument necessaires pour encourager nos fabricans imitateurs et les mettre en Etat de vendre à aussi bon compte les objets de la même qualité.

VERRE

Quand je vois la chimie se perfectionner tous les jours en france, Je suis étonné de l'ignorance et de l'imperfection de nos verreries. Nos goblets, nos caraffes sont d'un verre verd dégoutant, tandisque celui des anglois au même prix ou a peu de difference est aussi blanc que la lumiere. Il ne faut penser à entrer en concurrence avec eux que quand nous les aurons imité.

GROSSE PORCELAINE

Tout le monde sait à quel degré de perfection les anglois ont porté l'art de faire la porcelaine et Jay déjà parlé de la grande consommation de cet article qu'ils semblent avoir

acquis le privilège exclusif de fournir. Il seroit donc de la dernière importance que le gouvernement voulut envoyer en Angleterre des hommes apprendre à perfectionner, ou que l'on en fit venir du même pays capable d'instruire nos ouvriers. Chacun peut se convaincre ici de l'Elegance et de la propreté des fayences qui y sont d'usage et Je me dis souvent pourquoi mes concitoyens qui font tant de belles choses, ne se perfectioneroient-ils pas en tout. De la protection, des lumières et des hommes de bonne volonté et mon but sera rempli. Quiconque en voyageant en Amérique voudra considérer attentivement un vaisseau, une Eglise, une maison, une table américaine, s'apercevra dans le premier, que les voiles, les cables cordages, les ancres viennent d'Angleterre, excepté le peu que fournit la Russie. Dans une Eglise ou une maison, il reconnoitra que les carraux de vitres, les peintures, les ferremens, les outils avec lesquels elles ont été construites, le meubles, tels que glaces, papiers peints, Estampes, tapis de pied &^a. &^a. viennent d'Angleterre. Les tables sont également couvertes de choses fournis par les anglois. Par rapport aux vêtemens chacun sait que les anglois les fournissent presque exclusivement. Pourquoi nous refuserions nous a entrer du moins dans la carrière avec eux.

GLACE

Il n'y a point de pays dans le monde ou les habitans soyent en général plus décemment logis que les américains. Est-il par exemple une seule maison ou il n'y ait pas des glaces proportionnées aux facultés du maître: sans briller par leur dorures elles sont décemment encadrées en bois d'acajou, de Mahogany ou de Noyer d'Europe. Peut on concevoir pourquoi les françois sembleroient condamnés à ne faire que du tres beau ou du tres mediocre. Eux qui ont si fort perfectionné l'art de faire ces mêmes glaces n'en

favoriseroient-ils pas le crédit en leur donnant tant par rapport a elles mêmes que par rapport à leurs garnitures, les formes qui conviennent aux peuples chez lesquels ils les importent. Si vous le croyez utile, Je puis inserer dans mon recueil général d'échantillons, les dimensions et les formes qui sont propres aux glaces qu'on pourroit fabriquer en france pour ce pays.

PAPIERS PEINTS

Pourquoi nos papiers peints n'égalent-ils pas en prix et en beauté ceux qui viennent de l'Angleterre. C'est un problème que Je ne puis ni comprendre ni resoudre. "Pourquoi le gouvernement n'établirait-il pas un Bureau secret composé des personnes habiles et patriotiques, à qui des citoyens zélés feroient parvenir les Reflexions utiles qu'ils feroient sur ce qui peut intéresser le commerce de leur patrie. Ce Bureau sera chargé d'après le résultat des lumières qui leur seroient transmises, d'éclairer et d'encourager nos manufactures en dirigeant leurs opérations et leurs manipulations. Il me semble que dans peu de tems l'industrie nationale se ressentiroit de cet Etablissement qui mettroit la France dans la voye de faire florir son commerce avec l'Etranger."

ARTICLES DE CUIVRE

La plus grande partie des meubles en cuivre viennent d'Angleterre. Elle fournit également en feuilles ce même métal dont on fait ici une grande consommation. L'envoy en france d'échantillons de meubles en cuivre du plus grand usage et du moindre encombrement ne porroit avoir que les meilleurs suites. Les chaudières de cuivre sont ici tres multipliées, en ce que les habitans (ne faisant point de lessives) font bouillir leur linge dans l'eau de savon, et qu'il est nécessaire que ce soit dans des vases de cuivre.

CUIRS

L'article des cuirs est ici de la plus grande importance, mais je n'ose en parler et en conseiller le commerce à la France. Il y auroit trop à reformer depuis que les Tanneries y sont tombées en ruines.

PLOMB LAMINÉ, EN BARRES ET À TIRER

La consommation de ce métal est très grande dans les Etats unis, par rapport à la Grande quantité de Vaisseaux et de maisons qu'on y construit chaque Jour. Les chasses des sauvages et même des Américains en demandent une grande quantité et c'est un article important pour traiter avec les premiers.

DROGUES ET MÉDECINES

N'est-il pas bien étonnant que les Français ne fournissent rien aux Américains dans cette branche si importante et si variée. Il n'y a point de nation dans le monde qui à population égale emploie et fasse tant d'usage de médecines.

RECAPITULATION

On se perd en conjectures quand on réfléchit attentivement que de tous les articles que Je viens de mentionner et de bien d'autres d'une utilité presque égale, sans parler des Etoffes, on ne voit arriver de France ici que de mauvais vins qui ne se vendent point, ou qu'on mêle et frelate s'ils arrivent en bon Etat, des eaux-de-vie inférieures au *Rum*, des draps de mauvaise qualité et de mauvaise couleur, des articles de luxe dont la vente ne dépend que d'un goût dangereux et passager. Au contraire les articles que j'ay spécialement cités et bien d'autres, sont de la première nécessité et d'une consommation immense et Journalière. Ils ne requièrent

que des matériaux qu'on a dans le Royaume et leur exportation emploieroit beaucoup plus de bras et de vaisseaux que les autres objets.

Si je ne fais, Monseigneur, qu'effleurer cette matière, c'est par la crainte de vous ennuyer ou qu'en surchargeant mes idées, Je ne les rendre Impracticables.

EXPORTATION DE L'AMERIQUE

J'avoue que je suis peu au fait des articles d'Exportation des Etats du sud. Je ne puis m'imaginer cependant que les Américains aillent jamais porter leurs Tabacs en France ou personne ne peut les acheter que les agens des fermiers généraux. Ils prefereront toujours aller chez les peuples ou la liberté de la vente leur fera esperer un prix plus haut. Si les ports de la France ne peuvent être ouverts aux Américains, ouvrons leur du moins quelques unes de nos Isles, car si tout leur est fermi, alors l'Amérique n'existera pas pour la France, ou si elle existe, l'indignation de se voir ainsi rebutés, substituera au bon accord qui nous unit actuellement un indifference totale.

Les François, Je ne sais pourquoi ne veulent point de l'huile de poissons des Américains, c'est cependant un article de Remise important. L'Angleterre vient d'imposer un droit de 18£ sterling par tonneau, sur ces huiles, pour encourager la pêche de la nouvelle Ecosse. Ce seroit ici le moment pour la France d'accorder aux premiers une certaine gratification pour la porter en France, d'ou la feroit secrètement passer en Angleterre. Il en est de même de la soude, on n'en donne point en France le même prix qu'en Angleterre. J'en ignore la raison, d'autant plus que dans peu d'annees, Elle fera un article de remise immense. Cela prouve que nous sommes inférieurs aux Anglois dans bien de Manufactures. Enfin si les François s'obstinent à ne rien prendre des Americains, ceux-ci finiront par ne rien prendre des François.

LAINES

L'Etat de Massachusetts produit actuellement de 3 à 400000^{lb}. de laine fine et très belle, quoiqu'en peu moins longue que celle d'Angleterre. Les Isles de Nantucket, de Marthas Vine Yard, d'Elisabeth, &^a en produisent qui sont plus belles encore. Ceci est un grand objet auquel J'ay donne toute mon attention. Elle se vent à peu pres 20 sols la livre. J'en ai acheté 100^l avec l'intention de l'envoyer en france pour y être étudiées et employées. Mais J'ignore si vous me permettriez de vous les adresser. Daigner, Monseigneur, approfondir et faire fructifier cette idée. 400,000^{lb} de laine annuellement achetée de l'Amérique, fabriquées en france et renvoyées ici en bons draps, feroit un objet de plus un million.

FROMAGE

On donne aux matelots françois à bord des vaisseaux d'Hollande sec et mauvais. On en fait ici d'Excellent et presque à aussi bon marché. Je désirerois qu'on en fit un essay. Je desirerois aussi introduire la meilleure espèce sur les tables françoises. Si on ne veut rien consommer d'ici, les Américains seront forcés de commercer ailleurs. Les Etats de Massachusetts, de l'isle de Rhodes, de Connecticut, de New York et de New Jersey faisoient auparavant la Guerre, une quantité immense de bons fromages.

MÂTURES

On s'est imaginé en france que les mâts de ce pays étoient inférieurs a ceux de Riga et de Russie. Que l'on demande à M^{rs} de la Marine quel fut le seul vaisseau qui ne fut pas démâté en sortant de Boston, et ils vous repondront que ce fut le vaisseau la *Gloire* qui avoit des mâts américains. Tant

qu'on s'en tiendra à de vains et vagues rapports, les choses resteront où ils sont. J'ose affirmer au contraire que le véritable *white pine de Penobscot* est le plus durable soit pour mâts, Planches ou Bordages, qu'aucun autre dont on se serve en Europe. Les Charpentiers de Philadelphie en doublent les côtés des vaisseaux et ils durent autant que s'ils étoient de chêne. C'est un fait constaté par l'expérience et auquel J'en pourrais ajouter plusieurs autres.

N.B. Je puis Procurer si cela est nécessaire La copie véritable du contract que la Marine Anglois avoit fait Icy avant la Guerre.

On a Icy un Moyen bien simple de connoître les Véritables bons mâts: un coipeau de 8 à 9 pouces de long de la véritable Espèce de Pin Pourra estre tourné sur luy-même sans se casser — Un coipeau de toute autre espèce se cassera avant que la revolution soit a demi faite.

BOIS COURBES POUR LA MARINE

Ceci est un objet bien important dont la France doit sérieusement s'occuper. Ce seroit d'ailleurs une nouvelle ressource pour les Américains, qui leur aideroit à trouver des remises, dont on ne peut trop multiplier les moyens, Si nous voulons soutenir notre Commerce avec l'Amérique.

CIRE VÉGÉTALE

Cet article peut devenir de la dernière importance. Si cette cire pouvoit devenir utile en France. C'est la raison qui m'a déterminé à envoyer un Echantillon à M. le Duc de la Rochefoucauld et à en donner un [illegible] à M. le M^{is} de la Fayette.

P. Cette cire est d'un usage Excellent et Merveilleux dans la Composition dont ils enduisent la Partie Immergée de leurs vaisseaux Marchands

NOUVELLE CONSTRUCTION
DU S. J. PECK

Cet homme singulier a passé sa vie à perfectionner la marche des vaisseaux et il y est parvenu. Les navires qu'il construit ne diffèrent des autres que par le fond. Quoiqu'à dimensions égales ils portent un quart plus que les autres, ils marchent cependant infiniment plus vite. Cette découverte est peut-être le dernier degré de perfection dont l'architecture navale puisse être susceptible. J'ay receuilli à ce sujet les papiers, les preuves et les Renseignemens les plus incontestables que Je vous ai adresser. Ces vaisseaux ont 16 propriétés nouvelles toutes bien constatées et qui sont merveilleuses. Je desirerois, Monseigneur, que les Principes du S^r Pecke fussent connus le plus tôt possible, ou que cet hommes [?] les possédant seul, il faut les ensevelir avec lui. Des modèles ne nous suffiroient pas pour l'imiter. S'il ne transmet luimême les principes de son invention, qui sont entièrement fondés sur des regles de Géométrie et des calculs que l'inspection seule du vaisseau ne nous feroit peut être pas saisir. Je désirerais que vous autorisassiez quelqu'un à traiter avec lui pour la communication de sa découverte et des Règles sur lesquelles elle est fondée. Je désirerois aussi que deux ou trois ingénieurs constructeurs fussent envoyés de france pour les étudier sous lui et les mettre en suite en pratique dans les chantiers du Roy. Tel est le grand objet de mes désirs et de mes Espérances. C'est le terme de mon ambition, puissent mes voeux etre exaucés sous votre ministère. Je me réjouirois bien sincèrement si Je pouvois y réussir; parceque Je serois sur d'avoir rendu à ma patrie un service bien important.

PERFECTION DE LA CONSTRUCTION
AMÉRICAINNE

Il faut l'avouer, nous sommes inférieurs aux Américains bien des détails de la construction et de la perfection des vaisseaux, sinon dans l'ensemble, dans les Bordages, au moins dans la distribution, dans les grémens, l'Elégance et surtout, J'ose le dire, l'art de tenir les vaisseaux sains et propres. Il y a un proverbe ici qui dit: *fonds de Boston et côtés de Philadelphie*, C'est l'Epitome de la perfection dans la Batisse. On peut assurer avec confiance qu'il y a beaucoup à apprendre ici dans les détails de l'Economie maritime, dans quelques parties de la Construction, dans le grément, la façon des canots. Ce qu'on appelle ici *Whale Boats* est ce qu'il y a dans le monde de plus fin et qui marche le plus vite à la rame et sans le moindre danger sur les Vagues. Ces canots sont supérieurs en vitesse même à ceux des sauvages qui ne sont que d'ecorce, et se comportent à merveille sur l'eau, quelque tems qu'il fasse. C'est avec ces canots qu'ils poursuivent et attaquent les Baleines.

Je désirerois donc, s'il m'est permis de parler aussi naïvement, que trois Jeunes constructeurs fussent envoyés à Boston et à Philadelphie. Par le moyen des Consuls, ils entreroient dans les Chantiers des meilleurs constructeurs et y travailleroient sous eux la Hache et le Compas à la main. Ce devrait être des Jeunes gens pleins de zèle, accoutumés au travail des mains et à l'étude. Quelle foule de connoissances locales ne pourroient-ils pas acquérir dans les Chantiers d'un peuple né marin, et qui surpasse à bien des Egards les anciens maitres les Anglois. Tel est le second de mes grands désirs. J'ose me flatter, Monseigneur, que vous considerez ces deux derniers objets selon leur importance et que vous voudrez bien me pardonner les reflexions qui viennent d'un grand désir d'être utile et des amples con-

versations que Jay eues avec les françois et les americains les plus instruits.

PROJET DE PERFECTIONNER LA NAVIGATION SUR
LES CÔTES DE L'AMÉRIQUE

Il seroit à désirer que les côtes maritimes des Etats unis fussent divisées en un certain nombre de portions et que l'Été prochain chacun d'elles fut assignées à autant de petits vaisseaux dont les capitaines hommes instruits de cette délicate Besogne, passeroient un certain tems à les relever; à en determiner les caps, à étudier les courants, et particulièrement celui du golphe du mexique, les remous, les contrecourants, les sonds; les fonds, les Bancs de sable, la nature et la marche des vents, &^a. Un été ainsi employé nous procureroit bien des lumières et bien des connoissances; formeroit de Jeunes officiers sous des capitaines expérimentés, éclaireroit notre navigation, enrichiroit nos cartes et edifieroit nos nouveaux compatriotes. .

Tous les Consuls devoit avoir chacun La grande carte dernièrement publiée à Londres, sur laquelle est marqué le courant du Golphe de mexique, la meilleure qui existe actuellement. Ils y insereroient toutes les nouvelles sondes et découvertes que font Journallement les pilotes américains, avec lesquels ils devoient à cet effet entretenir une correspondance suivie. Ce sont en général, des hommes très instruits et bien supérieurs à ceux qu'on appelle Vulgairement Pilotes en france.

Tels sont, Monseigneur, les reflexions que Je me suis cru obligé par Etat et comme bon citoyen, de vous communiquer. Elles ne sont pas redigées avec toute la precision dont elles seroient susceptibles, mais la foiblesse de ma santé ne me l'a point permis et d'ailleurs elles ne sont que l'Effusions de mon amour pour ma Patrie.

J'ai proposé, Monseigneur, des Gratifications en faveur de nos fabricans imitateurs de modèles anglois, qui pourroient vous paroître onereuse; mais Elles ne seroient nécessaire que pour encourager les premiers essais.

Puissent, Monseigneur, mes foibles efforts répondre à la confiance dont vous avez bien voulu m'honorer et être utiles à ma patrie dont une longue absence ne m'a point détaché.

[The above statement was copied and enclosed in a letter of Crèvecoeur's to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld of March 14, 1785. At the end is added in Crèvecoeur's own hand (the rest was written by another hand) the note which follows.]

Première Base du Commerce de la France avec L'Amérique: Perfection des Gros articles d'encombrement dont La consommation augmente tous les Jours.

Seconde Base du Commerce de la France avec l'Amérique: L'achat par les age[nts] de la Marine, des Chênes Verds de la Georgie, des Goudrons Terebinthes &^a de la Caroline septentrionale, des Beaux Mâts de la Rivière de Connecticut et de Penobscot — Ces achats doneront aux Americaines la facilite de faire Leurs Remises.

Troisieme Base etc.

l'introduction en France des Soudes de ce Pays au même Prix que on en donne en Angleterre.

Des laines du Massachusetts, des Fromages du mesme Pays, Pour l'usage de la Marine.

S^t. Jean de Crevecoeur''

CHAPTER XIII

LAST DAYS OF THE CONSULSHIP

THE ship which took Crèvecoeur back to his post, the *Courrier de l'Europe*,¹ was the same in which he had travelled to America in the fall of 1783, and had gone back to France in the summer of 1785. The voyage took about six weeks.² Part of it must have been stormy, for an anecdote contained in a small book of Cadet-de-Vaux's³ and reproduced in the *Vie et Ouvrages*,⁴ describes how the *Courrier* met a vessel from one of the Carolinas, which had been blown out of her course and was without food or water. The exhausted crew were taken on board the packet and food was prepared for them. The sailors, however, happened to see some tobacco and fastened upon it greedily: When their rescuers remonstrated, reminding them that they were dying of hunger and thirst, they replied, "Yes, but we are dying for tobacco, too." The names of Crèvecoeur's fellow-passengers, or at least some of them, are preserved in the newspaper notices⁵ which reported the ship's arrival. The list included John Paul Jones, Samuel Breck, the daughter

¹ The ship is referred to by name, and also by number as "Packet No. 7" in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, July 5, 1787.

² Forty-five days, according to the *New York Packet*, June 29, 1787.

³ *Moyens de prévenir le retour des disettes*, p. 56. The incident may have been reported in Crèvecoeur's letter to him, written while he was still in Boston, summarized p. 368, *Vie et Ouvrages*.

⁴ Page 136, note 4.

⁵ See *New York Packet*, June 29; *New York Journal*, June 28; *New Haven Gazette*, July 12, 1787.

of M. de Beaumanoir, the Marquis de Lotbinière, Mr. Rucker (of the firm of Constable and Rucker) and his wife, J. P. Norris of Philadelphia, Miss Betsey Ramsay, Mr. Holker, the son of the former French agent, and Mr. Mumford of Richmond.

Among the letters, which Crèvecoeur carried with him to America, was a letter of introduction to Madison, written by William Short. It is quoted almost in full, in order to show the estimate of Crèvecoeur that was held by those who knew him, and also because it is a charming introduction to Short himself.

"M. Crevecoeur the French consul at New-York and who sails in the present Packet for that place, tells me that he will not leave me until I put him in some way of being introduced to your acquaintance when he shall arrive there — this favor he intended to have asked of M. Jefferson, but in his absence addresses himself to me — You may well suppose Sir that my pride would not permit me to let M. de Crevecoeur or any body here believe that I was not well enough acquainted with you to give a letter of introduction. — If you have read the article *Etats-Unis* in the new *Encyclopedia* you will not be surprized either at M. Crevecoeur's earnestness to cultivate your acquaintance or my willingness not to contribute to it. — There is no body whom I would introduce to you more readily Sir than M. de Crevecoeur, because there is no body more capable of explaining to you the present ideas of France with respect to America — because there is no body who understands more perfectly the interests of the two countries as they relate to each other, and none more zealous to promote them mutually, as he has uniformly manifested during his late residence in Paris. You will find him an indefatigable searcher after useful knowledge, an enthusiast for improvements in the useful arts and well acquainted with all which has taken place in this part of Europe during his stay here. — Such a man cannot fail being useful to you Sir, at New-York, whether considered as a member of the foederal head or as a private philosopher. This I hope Sir will induce you to excuse the liberty I have taken, and to which I confess I have been impelled by a mixture of vanity with the desire to oblige M. de Crevecoeur."⁶

⁶ Madison Papers, Vol. XII:20,093; Library of Congress.

The reference to the article États-Unis in the new Encyclopedia⁷ suggests that Crèvecoeur was its author. It is well-known, however, that this section of the Encyclopedia, and that relating to the separate states, was deputed to a M. de Meunier,⁸ who submitted his work to Jefferson for revision. There is abundant evidence, nevertheless, in the long article and in the shorter ones on the separate states, that the author had read Crèvecoeur's work attentively. It is probable, too, that he may have conferred with him at the time of its writing or of its revision. Two other works belonging to this period owe something to Crèvecoeur. With regard to the translation of his *Notes on Virginia*, Jefferson wrote to one of his friends:

"You ask me if there is any French translation of my notes? There is one by the Abbé Morellet: but the whole order is changed and other differences made, which, with numerous typographical errors, render it a different book, in some respects perhaps a better one, but not mine."⁹

There is no reference here, to be sure, to Crèvecoeur's part in this work, but in a note to Jefferson the Abbé Morellet said: "M. de Crèvecoeur told me yesterday in the careful reading that you gave to our translation, you had been dissatisfied at several points where I had not understood you well. . . ." This suggests that Crèvecoeur was concerned to some degree, at least, in the translation. The other work to which Crèvecoeur contributed was François Soulés' *Histoire des troubles de l'Amérique anglaise*. Jefferson wrote to the author, January 19, 1787:¹⁰

⁷ *Encyclopédie méthodique par ordre des matières*, etc., Paris, 1782-1832.

⁸ See Jefferson, *Works*, Mem. edit., IV:138, 158, 287, 296, 327; and also an interesting letter among the Short Papers at Washington, in Volume I, dated October 25, 1786.

⁹ Jefferson, *Works*, Ed. by Ford, IV:472-473, Dec. 15, 1787.

¹⁰ Letters to Jefferson, 1786-1789, Library of Congress.

"I have the honor of enclosing to you the sheets on the subject of Wyoming. I have had a long conversation with M. Crèvecoeur. He knows well that canton. He was in the neighborhood of the place when it was destroyed, saw great numbers of the fugitives, aided them with his wagons, and had the story from all their mouths. He committed notes to writing at the moment, which are now in Normandy, at his father's. He has written for them, and they will be here in five or six days, when he promises to put them into my hands. He says there will be a great deal to alter in your narration, and that it must assume a different face, more favorable both to the British and Indians. His veracity may be relied on, and I told him I was sure your object was truth; and, to render your work estimable by that character, that I thought you would wait, and readily make any changes upon evidence which should be satisfactory to you. The moment I receive his notes I will communicate them to you. . . ." ¹¹

In a few weeks he wrote again to Soulés:

"I send you the papers M. de Crèvecoeur sent to Normandy for. The account of the destruction of Wyoming begins page 40. You may certainly rely on the author's facts. . ." ¹²

One of the first impressions which Crèvecoeur received upon landing was the altered appearance of the city. He wrote, in fact, to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld that he had hardly been able to recognize the town.¹³ There were no more ruins to be seen, nor any trace of the fires that had raged during the war, except in one section, which was soon, he said, to be cleared up. With all this improvement he felt that there was great cause for regret, however, in the increased extravagance of New Yorkers. This was due, he believed, to the example of the ambassadors and the large number of foreigners whom the presence of Congress brought to the city, and to the tastes which returned Americans brought back with them from abroad.¹⁴ But there was

¹¹ Jefferson, *Works*, ed. H. A. Washington, II:102-103.

¹² *Ibid.*, II:114-115, Feb. 2, 1787. ¹³ In the library at Mantes.

¹⁴ Jefferson was impressed with the same manifestation of luxury, upon his return, and retired in disgust to a cottage on Maiden Lane where he lived in great simplicity.

not much time for reflection, for soon after his arrival¹⁵ Crèvecoeur went to Boston to see his daughter, who was still staying with the Fellowes. Here he arrived in time to see the havoc wrought by the fire, which had nearly destroyed the city. Only a change of wind had saved the Fellowes' home from sharing the fate of its neighbors. Most of July, all of August, perhaps part of the autumn as well, Crèvecoeur spent in Boston, where he met a number of old friends and made a number of new ones, according to his custom wherever he went. A few incidents of his visit can be gleaned from a letter which he wrote to Short the twenty-second of July.¹⁶ "I have come over here," he wrote, "to see my daughter and to avoid the heats of August." Here he met Governor Bowdoin, with whom he had corresponded while in France, and Colonel David Humphreys, whom he had introduced to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld three years before. Two long letters from Crèvecoeur to the Duke d'Harcourt¹⁷ record further interesting experiences, including an account of the reception to the French squadron.¹⁸

There is a tradition that upon his return from New England he accompanied Franklin to Lancaster, where the corner-stone of Franklin College was laid. The foundation of this report was undoubtedly the sentence in the *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie*,¹⁹ which says that he had accompanied Franklin, in 1787, to Lancaster at the time when the

¹⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 137.

¹⁶ At the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

¹⁷ Hippeau, *Gouvernement de Normandie*, III:136, ff., July 27, 1787, and 146, ff., Aug. 29, 1787.

¹⁸ These two letters, among the most interesting and valuable Crèvecoeur papers in existence, led M. Hippeau to characterize their writer as "a rarely intelligent observer," a judgment in which the majority of readers would probably concur.

¹⁹ I:26.

aged governor was asked to lay the corner-stone of the college for Germans, which had just been founded. It is by no means certain, however, that either man was present at that time.²⁰ This is probably only one more instance of the many occasions when Crèvecoeur, for the sake of greater vividness, chose to represent the scenes which he is describing as having passed actually under his own eyes. During the summer Crèvecoeur presented the new edition of his *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain* to Governor Bowdoin, to Washington and to Franklin. The copies of his book that had been sent to Washington²¹ and to Franklin were delivered to them by Paul Jones, who did Crèvecoeur another service during the summer, in nominating him for election to the American Philosophical Society.²² His admission did not take place, however, until the sixteenth of January of the following year.

Among the many details, with which his letters of the summer and autumn of 1787 are crowded, are those which deal with the newly opened territories on the Ohio. It may be mere coincidence that a pamphlet which appeared in July, entitled *Articles of the Association by the name of the Ohio Company*,²³ contained extracts from Crèvecoeur's description of that region. The "elegant extracts" from the writings of Mr. St. John de Crèvecoeur, which appear in another pamphlet²⁴ descriptive of the Western Country, particularly of the recently purchased tract by the Ohio

²⁰ The late Prof. Albert H. Smyth, in a conversation on this subject, expressed his opinion that Franklin was too ill at this time to have accomplished the journey.

²¹ Franklin Papers, XXXV:167, Amer. Phil. Soc.; Washington Letter-Book, 1787-1788, p. 124, Lib. of Cong.

²² *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 364.

²³ At the John Carter Brown Library at Providence.

²⁴ Advertised in the *Salem Mercury*, Nov. 27, 1788; also at John Carter Brown Library.

Company, probably were borrowings from the first. The sending of the pamphlet to Crèvecoeur by the Ohio Company may only have been a recognition of his interest in that region, or an acknowledgment of what they had owed to his description. These facts might suggest that his interest in the settlement of these lands may have been based on some financial connection with the project. Nothing has been found to support this assumption, however; no mention of his name appears in the list of stockholders of the company. Yet there is no question that his glowing account of the new world in general, and of the wonderful fertility of this region in particular, stimulated emigration to this country, and so may have led indirectly to the disastrous failure of the French colony on the Scioto that founded Gallipolis. There were those, like Lézay-Marnésia,²⁵ who did not hesitate to attribute the blame of this failure to Crèvecoeur's rose-colored pictures of American life. Volney wrote sarcastically that the condition of the colony on the Scioto was rather remote from the poetic felicity chanted by the "American Farmer." "If the authors of such romances could hear the panegyrics bestowed on themselves on the spot, they would surely be disgusted with those trite rhetorical talents that in the present instance have destroyed the comfort of five hundred families."²⁶ The miserable fate of the settlers on the Scioto was due to false representations on the part of unscrupulous speculators in France, and consequent false hopes on the part of the emigrants who went out there. There is nothing to lead one to think that Crèvecoeur lent himself to any kind of fraud in connection with the matter, or that he was doing anything but expressing his sincere opinion of the unbounded possibilities for

²⁵ See *Lettres écrites des rives de l'Ohio*.

²⁶ *View of the Climate and Soil of the United States of America*. . . . London, 1804, translated.

happiness and wholesome living that America offered. He had tried it and found it to be so; there was no reason to think that others who equalled his efforts might not also equal his success as an American farmer.

Toward the end of the year Crèvecoeur's letters begin to express some anxiety in regard to the change in the ministry, which had taken place with the resignation of the Maréchal de Castries and the appointment of the Count de La Luzerne.²⁷ Lafayette exerted himself in Crèvecoeur's behalf at this crisis, and interviewed the new minister, who assured him that all would be well for the consul at New York. Luzerne declared that he intended to confirm all the appointments of the Maréchal de Castries, Crèvecoeur's in particular as one of the best that had been made, certainly better than any he himself could substitute. "May I write this to him?" Lafayette asked. "Certainly," replied Luzerne, "tell him this from me, give him my word and tell him that he may depend upon it."²⁸ In spite of this reassurance, Crèvecoeur felt that his position was uncertain. This sense of uncertainty and the conviction that his reports would be read carelessly, if at all, perhaps even used to his disadvantage, led him to send only the scantiest communications to the ministry from this time to the end of his stay. The index of the consular despatches from 1787 to 1790 mentions only sixteen from Crèvecoeur during this period, and of these only ten are to be found at the Archives des Affaires Étrangères.²⁹ One of these reports, dated December 25, 1787, describes a trip which he made at the order of the Maréchal de Castries to the copper mines of New Jersey. There had been a scheme to make use of the packets, which generally returned to France lightly laden, to carry copper

²⁷ Brother of the former minister to the United States.

²⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 143.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144, note 2.

to the foundries at Romilly. The mines, however, were not well managed and yielded so little that the project never came to anything.

From now until the end of his term of service, Crèvecoeur devoted comparatively little attention to commercial matters. The reasons for his discouragement have been given in the previous chapter. In the first place, France was too much occupied with the situation at home to interest herself very deeply in the question of commercial relations with this country. Then, too, Crèvecoeur no longer had the ear of the Maréchal de Castries, who had listened sympathetically to his earlier projects in behalf of commercial reform. Furthermore, the packet service was on the wane. Without regular communication between the two countries, merchants were hardly to be expected to enter upon commercial enterprises of any considerable extent. Convinced, then, that little could be done for French-American commerce, Crèvecoeur now devoted his energy to a new cause — the invention of John Fitch, the precursor of Robert Fulton. On the ninth of January, Crèvecoeur wrote to the Duke d'Harcourt³⁰ a long account of this invention. In 1784, he explained, a committee of Congress offered a tract of fertile land on the Ohio river, thirty thousand acres in extent, to the person who should discover the cheapest and simplest device for getting heavily laden boats up stream without being towed. A Pennsylvanian by the name of John Fitch, subsequently invented a device which accomplished this result by the use of steam. In the summer of 1787, Fitch had given a demonstration of his steamboat on the Delaware, in the presence of a

³⁰ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 319-323, quoted from the series of articles in the *Moniteur*, March 7, 29, and April 19, 1859, by Pierre Margry, entitled, *La navigation du Mississippi et les precurseurs de Fulton aux États-Unis*.

number of distinguished spectators, including David Ritzenhouse, all of whom declared that Fitch had solved the problem propounded by Congress, and on the following day gave him certificates to this effect. A committee of Congress was soon to investigate these certificates and examine into the matter further, in order to determine whether the inventor was entitled to the land promised. The rest of the letter has a practical object:

"The usefulness of this invention, immeasurable for a country like this, is no less so for France, where the expense of towing is often so great as to decide people to transport their merchandize by land rather than by water, as I noticed between Rouen and Paris, and Havre and Rouen. . . . I cannot help wishing that a device so simple and so important might be introduced into France as soon as possible. I would suggest, to that end, that the king should authorize me to have this man make a model of the machine and install it in a boat large enough to enable one to judge of its effect, all of which could easily be sent to France by one of the packets. Further, I would propose that the king should offer several hundred louis to the inventor, by way of recompense, for Mr. Fitch does not make any charge for imparting the principals of this device, nor for showing how it is to be used."

The Duke d'Harcourt was much interested in this account and sent it to Luzerne in March, with a hearty endorsement of the writer. Luzerne at once took action in the matter and wrote to Laforest, who was consul general at New York, to unite his efforts to those of Crèvecoeur's to get possession of Fitch's secret.³¹

A few days after he had sent off his letter to the Duke d'Harcourt, Crèvecoeur wrote to Franklin in regard to the new invention. Franklin's reply ³² was not very encouraging. Instead of seeing the advantages which the new method of

³¹ March 11, 1788 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 318).

³² Feb. 16, 1788, cited *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 153-154. The original is at Washington (see Franklin Papers, Misc. VIII:1858-1859).

propulsion offered, he saw only the difficulties attendant upon it.

"Since writing the within I have received your Favour of the 30th Jan. respecting M^r. Fitch's Steam Boat, and asking my Opinion of it. Not being able to go much abroad, I have never seen it, and tho' I never doubted that the Force of Steam properly apply'd might be sufficient to move a Boat against the Current in most Rivers, yet when I considered the first cost of such a Machine as the Fire Engine, the Necessity of its being accompany'd constantly by a skilful Engineer to work it, and repair it on occasion, and the room it would take up in the Boat, I confess I have fear'd that the advantage would not be such as to bring the Invention into Use. But the opinion you have sent me of M^r. Rittenhouse, who is an excellent Judge, gives me more favourable Sentiments of it."

Laforest did not receive the letter from Luzerne until nearly a year after this time.³³ In the interval Fitch's invention had been challenged. A Virginian, James Rumsey, published in January, 1788, a pamphlet on the application of steam to the propulsion of vessels, to which Fitch replied in May with *The Original Steamboat supported, or a Reply to Mr. James Rumsey's pamphlet, shewing the true priority of John Fitch*. Rumsey's rejoinder was a new edition of his pamphlet, somewhat enlarged. Laforest, whatever his opinion may have been in regard to which man was first in the field, seems to have been convinced that the method proposed by Rumsey was superior to that proposed by Fitch.³⁴ This he asserted in his reply to Luzerne, adding that Rumsey had gone to Europe to demonstrate his invention in England and in France. This letter naturally cooled the minister's enthusiasm in regard to supporting Fitch's discovery, but Crèvecoeur did not relax his efforts in the inventor's behalf, and continued to receive letters from him until the end of the year.

³³ The end of January, 1789 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 155).

³⁴ Laforest's letter is dated Feb. 15, 1789 (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 322).

In the series of letters that passed between Fitch and Crèvecoeur from March 19, 1788, until December 14, 1789,³⁵ Fitch poured out his discouragement and his resentment at the unfair treatment he had received, and Crèvecoeur kept up the inventor's spirits as best he could. Fitch's gratitude for Crèvecoeur's kindness was very sincere. A letter from Crèvecoeur to Fitch in March³⁶ shows how the inventor had hoped to repay it.

"Altho' I am conscious you rate too high the feeble efforts I have made, yet I cannot help acknowledging how much I am flattered with the idea you have suggested of giving my name to the first Township you intend to lay out on those lands, which it is probable the justice and wisdom of Congress will bestow on you.

To the sentiments which the knowledge of your talents has inspired me with, this friendly intention adds that of Gratitude; if you succeed as I make not the least doubt in putting the finishing hand to your useful Machine, you'll be intitled to that of your Country & all Europe. It will greatly add to my happiness, if some time hence I receive information that my application to our Ministry has been crowned with success; 'tis the duty of great & good Kings to encourage & reward superior merit wherever it appears, & most particularly to foster such inventions as are likely to become so extensively beneficial as yours."

Not content with writing to his friends in France, Crèvecoeur went himself to interview his fellow-townsmen. A letter of the tenth of April speaks of his having called on Messrs. Hamilton, Irwin, Brown of Kentucky, and the President. "All say when seven states are on the Floor your affair should be decided." All these efforts, however, were unsuccessful, and after Crèvecoeur's final return to France Fitch followed him in 1792, in a last attempt to gain recognition and support from France. The Convention received him with honor, but gave him no money with which to carry on his experi-

³⁵ Among the Fitch Papers at the Library of Congress.

³⁶ March 19, 1788, at the Library of Congress.

ments, so he finally returned to America, where he died in poverty and discouragement. It is not possible to go into the merits of the Fitch-Rumsey controversy here. Robert de Crèvecoeur maintains that Rumsey stole Fitch's idea in applying steam to the propulsion of his boat,³⁷ and he is further convinced that, in spite of Laforest's prejudice in his favor, Rumsey's method was inferior to the one invented by Fitch. If Fitch had been supported, as Fulton was later by Robert Livingston, Robert de Crèvecoeur thinks that Fitch would have had the success that was later Fulton's. William Duer, in his *Reminiscences of an Old Yorker*,³⁸ says that when Fitch left France he deposited his plans, models, drawings, calculations, and memoranda with Mr. Vail, the American consul at Lorient, by whom they were delivered to Fulton at Livingston's request.

The letters that passed between Crèvecoeur and his friends during the remainder of his stay in America, are largely concerned with political matters. The adoption of the constitution, state by state, in this country, the preparations for the coup d'état in France, and the developments of the year 1789, fill page after page. Crèvecoeur, in the meanwhile, seems to have become more of a personage and less of an official. He seems to have known most of the people of consequence, and to have been well thought of by them. His election to the Philosophical Society, early in 1789, is one of the numerous indications of this.³⁹ An

³⁷ In this belief he is supported by other writers (see *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 150).

³⁸ Page 49.

³⁹ At the time of his admission, Brissot de Warville, who was then in this country, Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, Diego de Gardoqui, the Spanish minister, and twenty others were admitted. The *Early Proceedings of the Society* (Phil. 1884) report his acknowledgment of his election May 15th, and the receipt of a book from him "made of the roots and barks of different plants and trees, being the first essay of the French inventor Levrier Delisle." The receipt of his *Lettres* (1787) also is acknowledged.

examination of the list of his correspondents further establishes this fact. The personal details which enter his letters of this period have to do, frequently, with the health of his sons and their progress in their studies. Jefferson, Short, the Countess de Damas, Mme. d'Houdetôt, all took pains to see them from time to time, and sent reports of their welfare to their father. It seems like looking in at their study-windows to read in one of Jefferson's letters to Crèvecoeur, "Their master speaks highly of Alexander's disposition and industry, but speaks more favourably of Louis' disposition than of his application."⁴⁰ During the summer of 1788, Crèvecoeur was disturbed in regard to Alexander's health.

"I am beginning to be anxious about his lungs," he wrote to Short, "I am so impressed with that danger, that by this same conveyance I am writing to ask for a four months' absence, to go and see him. In the meanwhile let me beg the Good Countess [Mme. d'Houdetôt] to send him to Besius [?] for the winter, where the climate and the situation is good. Then I will go and get him and take him to Bermuda if necessary. I have often seen people who were very ill, return from there completely restored. The sea air, the change of climate, and the pleasure of being with me, will make him over, I hope."⁴¹

By October he seems to have been slightly reassured:

"I return you my thanks," he wrote to Jefferson, "for the good accounts you are pleased to give me of my two boys, may your kind predictions be accomplished. I intend to have the eldest one over next Spring, and am in hopes the sea and the exercise of a horse will confirm his health."⁴²

Upon Crèvecoeur's return to New York from Boston, in the autumn of 1787, his daughter may have accompanied

⁴⁰ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 374, translated.

⁴¹ Short Papers, Library of Congress, Vol. IV, August 13, 1788.

⁴² Jefferson Papers, Lib. of Cong., ser. 2, vol. 14, no. 70.

him.⁴³ Where Crèvecoeur was living at this time is not known; he may have returned to 202 Queen Street, where he had lived before. That he had an establishment of his own seems probable from the statement Brissot makes in his *Mémoires*,⁴⁴ when he refers to the fact that Crèvecoeur received him for only a single night, procuring lodgings for him the following day in a house near by.⁴⁵ Two letters to Colonel Wadsworth in November, 1788, give a glimpse of Fanny, who was visiting the Wadsworths at Hartford. On the fifth of that month, William Knox wrote from New York:

"I beg you to tender my best compliments to Mrs. Wadsworth, your son and young ladies and tell Miss Crevecoeur, that we are all anxious to have her return again to N. York and that she must not fail to hold herself in readiness to embrace the opportunity of coming with my brother and niece, who will certainly leave Boston next week."⁴⁶

⁴³ Mr. Sanborn says positively that Fanny went to New York with her father, soon after his return from France in that year (*Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Biog.*, July 1906, p. 271). ⁴⁴ Ed. Lescure, p. 399.

⁴⁵ The story of Brissot's quarrel with Crèvecoeur is hardly worth entering upon at length. Brissot had formerly been one of Crèvecoeur's warmest eulogists (see his *Examen critique des voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale de la marquis de Chastellux*. . . . London, 1786). They had also been associated in the Société Gallo-Américaine, and Crèvecoeur had written for him a letter of introduction to Governor Bowdoin (*Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, XVI:239). They were both admitted to the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia on the same occasion, and Brissot, upon his return to France, spoke in a friendly manner of Crèvecoeur (see *Voyages dans les États-Unis . . . en 1788*, Paris, 1791). Later, however, Brissot maintained that he had not been treated with sufficient consideration by Crèvecoeur at this time, and in his *Mémoires* gives great emphasis to this, maintaining that Crèvecoeur was so concerned for his position that he was afraid to stand by his friend. This is probably somewhat unjust, yet it must be remembered that since Brissot had become an out and out revolutionary he was perhaps not an altogether convenient guest for the consul of His Most Christian Majesty.

⁴⁶ At the Connecticut Historical Society.

His brother (General Henry Knox) wrote a little later from Boston:

"Mrs. Knox has written to me that it is Mr. St. John's desire I should escort his daughter Miss St. John from y^r. house to New York — This I shall do with pleasure if it is convenient to her, as Mr. James Jarvis [?] his lady Miss Moore my daughter and myself go on in a large coach which will carry six persons."⁴⁷

Fanny was eighteen years old at this time. She was a strikingly beautiful girl and must have been a very picturesque figure in the social life of the city. Miss Delesdernier, describing her appearance,⁴⁸ says that she had a high forehead crowned by a mass of rich golden hair,⁴⁹ eyes of a blue so dark that they seemed almost black, with eyebrows darker than her hair. "A fine straight nose; thin sensitive nostrils; a mouth not too small for expression; teeth even and white; a rich Norman shape; with distinguished manners, and a mind of a high order, made her universally attractive."⁵⁰

Some idea of the little world of that day, the rather dingy background against which the fine clothes and fine manners of the time flourished, may be gained from a delightful sketch of New York in the year 1789 contained in the *Fourteen Miles Round*, in the *Half Moon Series*:⁵¹

"New York was a dull and dirty little town in 1789. It was a city without a bathroom, without a furnace, with bedrooms which in winter lay within the arctic zone, with no ice during the torrid

⁴⁷ Nov. 16, 1788; also at the Connecticut Historical Society.

⁴⁸ Probably guided by the little likeness that Crèvecoeur had made in the spring of 1785 for Abigail Fellowes, and by family tradition.

⁴⁹ The portrait in the possession of the Crèvecoeur family shows that for "golden" we must read "auburn."

⁵⁰ *Fannie St. John*, p. 48-49. It is interesting to compare this account with the description of her father contained in the letter of inquiry from Normandy in 1773 (p. 313 of the Appendix).

⁵¹ By Alfred Bishop Mason, and Mary Murdoch Mason, New York, 1897.

summers, without an omnibus, without a moustache, without a match, without a latch-key. . . . The streets were narrow,—how narrow may be judged from the fact that both Wall and Liberty, from Broadway to Nassau, were widened in 1790 to their present petty dimensions. Pearl was so narrow that sidewalks were forbidden. A State law provided that people going north must always make way for those coming south. In May, 1788, the Grand Jury had reported the streets 'to be dirty and many of them impassable.' Pigs were the only scavengers. They ran at large in the streets of New York until within the memory of many men now living. Most of the garbage was thrown into the Streets. A little of it went to the river at night on the heads of slaves. On December 19, 1789, the Daily Advertiser appealed to the High Constable, who was supposed to do thoroughly what the pigs did in part, in this moving fashion: 'AWAKE THOU SLEEPER, let us have clean streets in this our peaceful seat of the happiest empire in the universe. That so our national rulers and their supporters may with convenience and decency celebrate a merry Christmas and happy New Year.' All wood delivered at store or house (there was no coal) was sawed and split on the street, after delivery. Street-lamps had been introduced in 1762; but they were few and poor, apt to go out, often left unlighted. In 1789, a citizen asked for relief because, as not a lamp was burning, he had walked into a pump on Nassau Street, near the Mayor's house.

The city water-works consisted chiefly of the Tea-Water Pump on Chatham Street (now Park Row) near Queen (now Pearl). Water drawn from it was said to make better tea than that from any of the minor pumps or private wells. The water came from the Collect, where the public washed its dirty linen. Highway robbery was common. The newspapers claimed that all the footpads came from Philadelphia. This was a spiteful saying by the little town against the big. . . . The city post-office had just been moved from 8 Wall Street, near the ferry, to 62 Broadway, at the corner of Liberty, and there was a public complaint that the postmaster had not chosen 'some more central place.' . . .

There was but one theatre in the city until 1798. It stood on John Street, near Broadway. . . . In 1789 tickets were sold at the box-office and at Gaines's bookstore in Hanover Square, the Sign of the Bible. The season extended this year from April 14th to December 15th. . . . On November 24th he [Washington] noted in his diary that he had invited 'Mrs. Adams, lady of the Vice-President, General Schuyler and lady,' etc. On this occasion the play was *The Clan-*

destine Marriage. It is reported by an awe-struck reporter that the President actually laughed. . . There were not half a dozen private carriages and not one rubber shoe in town,—facts which explain Washington's diary for November 29, 1789: 'Being very snowy, not a single person appeared at the Levee.' Clothes were too costly to be lightly risked. Merchants tempted their feminine customers with amens, cordurets, camblets, callimancos, casserillias, durants, duffils, dowlas, fearnoughts, florentines, honey-comb thick-setts, hair-bines, lustrings, moreens, osnaburgs, platillas, rattinets, romalls, dibdelures, shalloons, taboreens, tammies, ticklenburgs, velverets and weldbores. . . One dame of high degree wore a pierrot of gray Indian taffeta with dark gray stripes; two collars (one white and one yellow), both trimmed with blue silk; a yellow corset (called 'shapes') with large blue cross-stripes; and a white satin hat with a large wreath of artificial roses. A well-known man was clad in a scarlet coat, white silk waistcoat embroidered with colored flowers, black satin breeches with paste knee-buckles, white silk stockings, low shoes with large silver buckles, and 'a small cocked hat on the upper part of his powdered hair, leaving the curls at his ears displayed.' He carried a gold-headed cane and gold snuff-box, and is rather an agreeable bit of color against the gray background of the New York of 1789."

Among her father's friends at New York was the Count de Moustier,⁵² the French minister who succeeded Luzerne in 1788. It is probable that Fanny was present at the ball which the Count de Moustier gave to the President in May, 1789, and just possible that her engagement to M. Otto, secretary of the French legation, may have been made public on that occasion.⁵³ Otto was a friend of some years'

⁵² The portrait of Washington which appears at the beginning of the third volume of Crèvecoeur's *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie* was drawn by the count's sister, the Marquise de Bréhan, who came to America in 1788.

⁵³ Louis Guillaume Otto was born at York in the grand duchy of Baden, May 7, 1754. At the University of Strasburg, which he entered very young, he made a special study of foreign languages and of law. He was recommended to the French government by the university, and at twenty-one went to Munich, where he was attached to the French legation under Luzerne.

standing, though just how far back his acquaintance with Crèvecoeur dated is impossible to say. In 1779 he came to America as secretary to Luzerne, minister from France. After Luzerne's departure in 1783, Otto returned to France, but came back to this country as secretary of the legation in 1785. He was chargé d'affaires from 1785, upon Barbé de Marbois' promotion to the Intendancy of Hispaniola, until 1788, when the new minister, the Count de Moustier, arrived at New York. Otto was very acceptable to the Americans, and was well-received and well-spoken of on every hand. In January, 1787, he was elected a member of the Philosophical Society, and later in the same year the college at Providence gave him the degree of Doctor of Laws. In March of this year, Otto married Elizabeth Livingston, youngest daughter of Peter Van Brugh Livingston and Mary Alexander. A glimpse of his establishment in Queen Street, after his marriage, is afforded by an entry in Manasseh Cutler's diary:

"Thursd. July 26 1787

We called first on the Sieur Otto, Charge des Affaires from the French Court, in Queen Street. He received us very politely, and was exceedingly sociable. He speaks good English, and has a truly philosophic mind. Although he is not the Minister plenipotentiary, for there is none at present from France, but he acts as such and lives in the style of a nobleman. His servants and attendants were numerous." ⁵⁴

Their married life was of short duration, for in December of the same year Elizabeth Livingston died.⁵⁵ The funeral of the wife of the representative of the French court in the United States was celebrated as a public event. After passing through Hanover Square and Wall Street, the cortège, which was composed of the foreign ministers, the governor of the state, the officers of Congress, the clergymen

⁵⁴ *Life, Jl. & Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler*, 1888, I:300.

⁵⁵ December 17, 1787.

of the various churches, etc., entered Trinity churchyard. During the entire ceremony which followed, minute-guns were fired by the French packet, and all the shipping in the harbor lowered their flags to half-mast. Among the pall-bearers were the ministers from Holland and Spain, the secretary of Congress, the secretary of the war department, the British consul general, and "the Consul of France at New York."⁵⁶ This is the first association of Crèvecoeur's name with Otto's that I have seen, but it is probable that their official acquaintance, at least, was of much earlier date. Robert de Crèvecoeur refers to him as a man whom the consul "had known and loved for many years."⁵⁷

Some time after his wife's death, Otto bought a house on Broadway, which he seems to have altered to some extent, for a newspaper in the latter part of 1789 reports that "the president of the United States now resides in Broadway, in the house that was lately improved by the Honorable Charge des Affaires of His Most Christian Majesty who has now removed to Cherry Street."⁵⁸ In the house on Cherry Street, Otto apparently lived in the same grand style that he had maintained at the time of Manasseh Cutler's visit. Here, in 1790,⁵⁹ he entertained a distinguished company on the occasion of the anniversary of the alliance between France and the United States. "Being the anniversary of the Alliance between France and the United States," the *Daily Advertiser*⁶⁰ reported, "the chargé des affaires . . . gave an entertainment to his Excellency the Vice President and Honorable the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chief Justice, and the Heads of the great

⁵⁶ *New York Journal & Weekly Register*, Dec. 20, 1787.

⁵⁷ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 164.

⁵⁸ *Gazette of the United States*, December 16, 1789.

⁵⁹ February 6, 1790.

⁶⁰ February 8, 1790.

Departments of the United States — to his Excellency the Governor and the Honorable the Chancellor of the State of New York and to the Diplomatic Body, and Foreigners of Distinction.”

In the spring of 1790, Crèvecoeur received permission to return to France on a leave of absence. About six weeks before he set sail, his daughter's marriage took place at St. Peter's church. They were married April 13th “by the Rev. Mr. Burke, officiating rector of the parish of St. Peter,” according to the notice in the *New York Journal and Weekly Register*.⁶¹ Robert de Crèvecoeur mentions among those who attended this wedding, Thomas Jefferson, then secretary of state, Jeremiah Wadsworth, Jonathan Trumbull, Richard Morris, M. and Mme. de la Forest, and William Seton.⁶² A few weeks later Crèvecoeur took his departure for France in the packet *Washington*,⁶³ and arrived at Havre early in July.

⁶¹ April 15th.

⁶² *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 163, 164.

⁶³ This was described in 1791 as a fast-sailing ship of about 300 tons burden, with good accommodation for passengers. Crèvecoeur was accompanied by M. and Mme. Leray de Chaumont, the son and daughter-in-law of Franklin's friend.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CRÈVECOEUR's return brought him to France at a time of great excitement, when his friends Lafayette, Brissot, and Target were high in popular favor and when therefore he might reasonably have expected and found opportunity for advancement. But with characteristic penetration Crèvecoeur saw the underlying uncertainty of public affairs, and with equally characteristic prudence forbore to identify himself with the political movements which were whirling men toward the year 1793.¹ He went directly to Normandy,² to his father's home, rather than to Paris, and summoned his two sons, whose education was now completed, to join him there. There is little trace in his correspondence of the activities of these years; no project seems to have been formed, his biographer says, except a determination to remain for the present in obscurity. This was a safe if not very glorious decision. It may be unreasonable to expect a man, who returns to his country with broken health after an absence of ten years, to join forces immediately upon his return with one faction or another in a conflict whose issues were only partly understood by those outside of that country,

¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 168.

² For the events of Crèvecoeur's life from this point to the time of his death, we have relied almost entirely upon the closing chapters of the *Vie et Ouvrages*, although we have varied the order of the outline and ventured to omit some of the details which were of interest to its original French readers, but necessarily less significant for English readers of the present day.

even though it would have made our story more dramatic if he had died on the scaffold with Brissot, shared Lafayette's exile, or been stoned with the Duke de la Rochefoucauld.

In 1791 Crèvecoeur left Pierrepont for Paris. It must be borne in mind that he was still consul,³ although he had succeeded, so long as Lafayette was in command of the forces at Paris, in obtaining extension to his leave of absence. In February, 1792, however, the minister of marine⁴ ordered him to return to his post. As the state of his health altogether forbade this, he requested his dismissal. Nothing came of this request, nor of one which he made in March of the following year for a pension. In view of this refusal, it is not clear how Crèvecoeur managed to subsist during these years, for his own resources were exhausted, and a misunderstanding between himself and his father seems to have prevented his sharing the home at Caen. Probably his eldest son, Alexander, was able to contribute something toward the support of the family through a position he had secured in an English bank at Paris,⁵ and Otto's return at the end of 1792 probably afforded some relief. Otto, who had again held the position of chargé d'affaires from 1790, reached France with his wife at the close of 1792, only to hear upon his arrival the news of his recall with that of the other French agents in the United States. He made immediate request for employment, and was given a position at the Foreign Affairs Office, where he became chief of the first division, January 29, 1793, in the place of Maret, who was sent on a mission to London.

Otto's relations with Déforgues, who became minister of foreign affairs in June, afforded some degree of protection

³ He retained the position until 1792, December, when all the French agents in the United States were recalled (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 169).

⁴ Bertrand de Molleville.

⁵ Boyd, Kerr and Co., rue de Grammont, no. 9 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 177).

for himself and his father-in-law, for Déforgues had been Danton's clerk and was consequently acceptable to the revolutionists. Yet Crèvecoeur was justified in feeling concern, in spite of this protection, and it is easy to understand why he was anxious to get his sons out of the country. He sent them to Havre in the autumn, where they stayed at the house of an American merchant, waiting a favorable opportunity to leave France. Crèvecoeur would have desired nothing better than to send them to America, but the sea was unsafe at that time, on account of the Algerian pirates. Alexander's opportunity came toward the end of October, when he was able to make his way to Hamburg,⁶ armed with letters of introduction to certain merchants of that city. Here he was fortunate enough to come upon a Frenchman named Barbazan, formerly a citizen of the United States, who received him like a son and succeeded in establishing him in business so profitably that Alexander was able not only to support himself, but to send back to Paris much-needed funds for the maintenance of his family. A curious body of correspondence from Crèvecoeur to his son at this epoch, sixty-four letters in all, running from November 29, 1793, to September 19, 1794, reveals a most ingenious, if baffling, system of precautions. The letters are addressed sometimes to "William Hastings," and during the whole of 1794 are dated, now from "Pine Hill," now from "New Haven," "Oswego," and various other places in the United States. Not only the place of writing, but the dating is purposely confused, and the persons referred to are alluded to under Indian names — Crèvecoeur

⁶ Robert de Crèvecoeur tells of a document in his possession, dated Oct. 19, 1793, a "certificat d'Hospitalité" from the city of Havre to Philippe-Louis Saint-John, a native of the United States, in France five weeks. He had come, to be sure, from Paris, but it was important not to look like an émigré (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 177).

is "Cahio-Harro," Alexander is "Téwénissa," and Otto "Mataxen." This circumspection he felt to be necessary, considering that the police were so vigilant at this time that the most trifling conversations, even the toasts that were offered, were known to the government. Robert de Crèvecoeur remarks with justice, however, that if this correspondence had ever reached the hands of the police, there is no doubt that it would have gravely compromised the writer, just because of the exaggerated precautions that were employed. Yet these letters, though odd in outward appearance, are an interesting revelation of Crèvecoeur's passionate affection for this son, whom he called the "child of Providence" in a letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, referring to the dangers through which Alexander had passed in the days of the American Revolution.

Louis meanwhile was still at Havre, but the merchant with whom he was staying was called away, which made it necessary for Louis to return to his father at Paris in February, 1794.⁷ But Paris was still unsafe, and Crèvecoeur was glad to obtain from Gouverneur Morris, in virtue of his son's naturalization in America, and the English-sounding name of St. John, by which he and his brother were legally designated, a passport which was made out April 11, 1794, to Philip-Lewis Saint-John,⁸ citizen of the United States, on his way to Philadelphia. The plan was to leave from Bordeaux and to go from thence to Hamburg. Louis set sail accordingly, May second, on a Danish ship bound for America by way of Lisbon, where he was to disembark and wait for a ship to take him to Hamburg. Instead of following this plan, however, he was seized with the desire he had long had to emigrate to America, and

⁷ Robert de Crèvecoeur has this passport, dated Feb. 11, 1794 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 194).

⁸ The completely anglicized form of all the names is noticeable.

sailed directly to Boston, where he at once set to work to try to find means to purchase a settlement on the American frontier. So far from being annoyed at this sudden change of plan, or anxious on his son's account, Louis' action seems to have revived Crèvecoeur's almost fainting courage and given him the greatest satisfaction. No greater proof could be asked of the sincerity of Crèvecoeur's recommendation of the life of the pioneer in the new world than the cheerfulness and eager interest with which he followed his son's venture into the wilderness. Louis' path was not altogether easy, although he succeeded in his first enterprise, the purchase of a tract of 220 acres from Chancellor Livingston in New Jersey near Navesink, a locality which Crèvecoeur had himself once surveyed. Some of the dwellers in this region remembered Crèvecoeur and gave his son a hearty welcome. Here Louis built himself a log-house, and for two years lived as the early settlers and his own father had before him. The principal furnishing of his house was a table made of a tree-trunk cut off near the root which was still buried in the earthen floor of his dwelling. He had no near neighbor except a young Frenchman who owned the property adjoining. This friend lost courage early in 1796 and left for New York. But Louis still persevered and so far from abandoning his farm, undertook to set up a saw-mill by a waterfall near his clearing. In spite of his courage and enthusiasm, his experiences often taxed his endurance, and his grandson remembers hearing him tell how long the winter days seemed when the snow lay white over the whole country. A frozen pig, hung from the rafters, was sometimes his main resource in the way of provisions; every morning he hewed off the portion which was to supply the day's repast. Yet he did not give up the enterprise until the middle of 1796, when his father, who felt that

absence from France was no longer necessary, wrote to him to come home.⁹ This he seems to have done without great reluctance. He left New York the seventh of July and reached Hamburg a month later. His father and brother had left Hamburg in April,¹⁰ and it was not until September that he reached Paris and saw again his brother and sister; his father, as will be seen presently, was then in Normandy.

It had been a great relief to Crèvecoeur during the early days of the Revolution to know that his sons were out of danger, but he was by no means easy on his own account. He tried vainly to obtain a passport from Gouverneur Morris, but this was less feasible than in the case of his children, for it was felt that Crèvecoeur's position as French consul abrogated his right to American citizenship, and he was too well-known in his public capacity and as an author to make it expedient to give him what he so greatly desired. When Monroe went to France in 1794, upon Morris' recall, Crèvecoeur, who had had some acquaintance with him and who had been able to be of service to him upon his arrival, hoped that he might receive some appointment which would offer a pretext for his departure. He was doomed again to disappointment, and wrote to Alexander that this last hope had failed. Accordingly he left Paris for Caen, where a reconciliation with his father took place, and thereafter he shared the discomfort and anxiety of that household until he was recalled to Paris at the end of November by Otto's arrest.

With Danton's downfall had come Déforgues' arrest, and a few months later¹¹ Otto was seized and secretly

⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 209-211.

¹⁰ April 1, 1794.

¹¹ November 2, 1794, according to Masson, p. 320, cited *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 202.

imprisoned in the Luxembourg. After six weeks' confinement,¹² Otto's release was obtained by Déforgues, who had meanwhile regained his own liberty, and Otto was reinstated in the office which he retained until 1795 when the service was reorganized. Crèvecoeur seems to have passed the winter of 1794 and 1795 in Paris, but in May he was living at Altona, a suburb of Hamburg, with his son. Business exigencies often called Alexander to Paris and to London; during his absences Crèvecoeur devoted himself to his son's interests. The life at Altona was uninteresting and extremely distasteful to Crèvecoeur, but he did not return to Paris until April, 1796. Before he left he was able to be of service to Mme. Lafayette when she went through that place on her way to Olmutz to join her husband, who was a prisoner there. A letter from Lafayette in 1800 to Crèvecoeur acknowledges his kindness at this time.¹³ Not long before his return to Paris, Crèvecoeur received from the French Academy, which had been reorganized under the name of the "Institute," an appointment as non-resident member.¹⁴ Soon after this he left Altona and returned to Normandy, where he remained until his father's death, in 1799.

¹² A memorial of these days of captivity may be seen in Trumbull's portrait of Otto (referred to by Robert de Crèvecoeur, p. 203), where the palace of the Luxembourg appears in the background.

¹³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 397.

¹⁴ February 24, 1796 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 209).

CHAPTER XV

LAST YEARS

During the years which followed, the Crèvecoeur family enjoyed an interlude of tranquillity. Toward the close of 1796 Otto, who was now without employment, bought at Lesches, near Meaux, a small estate to which he and his father-in-law devoted themselves, and Louis also, upon his return from America in this same year. Crèvecoeur himself was not constantly at Lesches because his father's failing health kept him at Pierrepont, but while Otto and Louis cultivated their new lands, he directed and advised them from a distance. Fanny, remembering her childhood on their Orange County farm, took charge of the poultry-yard, and Otto's mother looked after the orchard. The experience of this household was similar to that of many other French families ruined by the Revolution, fortunate if they could find a retreat which offered support and safety. The difference in the case of the family at Lesches was that this was neither a mere expedient nor a masquerade, but an experience which all of the household seem to have genuinely enjoyed. They were not without congenial neighbors in this retreat; the indomitable countess Charles de Damas, an old and tried friend of Crèvecoeur's, lived at Livry; M. and Mlle. de Gouves, at Taverney, and Mme. Cadet-de-Vaux, at Franconville, were also among those whose society seems to have given especial pleasure to the household at Lesches.

Their life here was interrupted in the spring of 1798, when Otto received an invitation from Sieyès, who had just been appointed to the embassy at Berlin, to accompany him as first secretary of the legation. Sieyès added that he should have greater confidence in the success of his mission if Otto would consent to share it with him. Otto left at once for Paris and from thence betook himself to his new post, leaving his wife behind at Lesches. Alexander St. John, who had recently married in Normandy, came to Lesches about this time with his wife, and the following year the household was further augmented by Crèvecoeur, whose father died toward the close of 1799. Fanny by this time had gone to rejoin her husband at Berlin, where Otto now occupied the post of chargé d'affaires. His tact and skill in this position won him an appointment to London, ostensibly to arrange for an exchange of prisoners, but in reality to negotiate the treaty of Amiens. After a short interval Otto's wife joined him in London, and later letters show that Alexander visited them at Portman Square during 1801.¹

The negotiation of the treaty of Amiens forms the culminating point in Otto's official career. The story of the signing of the treaty has been often told. We read in Thiers' *Consulat et Empire*² that when it was learned that the preliminary treaty had arrived, crowds hurried to the French legation where they found Otto in his carriage with Napoleon's aide, Colonel Lauriston, on his way to Lord Hawkesbury; whereupon they unharnessed the horses and drew the carriage themselves through the London streets. Robert de Crèvecoeur speaks of having seen an engraving made at this time of the French legation illuminated and surrounded by a vast throng. The "splendor" of the celebration in honor of the great event

¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 401.

² II:180.

is described by Ashton in the interesting chapter devoted to the subject in his *Dawn of the Nineteenth Century in England*, with an air of patronage that is no less amusing than the circumstances he details:

"We, who are accustomed to brilliant devices in gas, with coruscating crystal stars and transparencies, would smile at the illuminations of those days. They generally took the form of a wooden triangle in each window-pane, on which were stuck tallow candles perpetually requiring snuffing, and guttering with every draught; or otherwise, a black-painted board with a few colored oil-lamps arranged in the form of a crown, with G. R. on either side . . . opposite M. Otto's house in Hereford Street . . . was a transparency of Bonaparte, with the legend, 'Saviour of the Universe.' Guildhall displayed in front, a crown and G. R., with a small transparency representing a dove, surrounded with olive. The Post-Office had over 6,000 lamps. The India House was brilliant with some 1,700 lamps, besides G.R. and a large PEACE. . . . The Bank had only a double row of candles in front."^{3 4}

Both Napoleon and Talleyrand recognized with gratitude Otto's services in the affair of the treaty, and the first consul ordered 30,000 francs to be sent to him as a mark of this appreciation.⁵ Yet, for some reason that has never been explained, Otto's place in the ministry was given to General Andréossy, a fact which caused him and his father-in-law some bitterness.⁶ To add to his disappointment, the embassy to the United States was offered to him, a post he would probably have found very acceptable, but his wife's health did not permit him to avail himself of it. Accordingly he returned to France and soon after

³ I: 52-56.

⁴ Ashton speaks of Otto's wife as "an American born at Philadelphia" (I:57).

⁵ See a letter from Mme. Otto, June 2, 1801, *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 401.

⁶ Crèvecoeur spent some days in London during the summer of 1802; his letters at this time were so despondent that his biographer did not care to reproduce any of them (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 229).

accepted the position of minister-plenipotentiary to Munich, a secondary post, but one which he filled with ability and turned to the greatest possible advantage for the Emperor, who appreciated his efforts in defeating the intrigues of the coalition, and made him counsellor of state and grand officer of the Legion of Honor, with the title of Count of Mosloy. Otto continued to live at Munich, where his father-in-law visited him for a time. In 1809 he was made ambassador to Vienna, a position which he held until 1813.

Before we follow Crèvecoeur to Munich, we must consider briefly the publication of his last book,⁷ which appeared at Paris in 1801. During the period which followed the departure of his sons from France in 1794, Crèvecoeur regained to some extent his courage and former spirits. He occupied himself during those dark days with his notes and memoranda, and fell to writing energetically eight hours a day. His plan was to add a fourth volume to the *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, which had increased by a volume at each succeeding reappearance. This plan was altered, but the material was used in a compilation, to which he gave the name of a *Journey through northern Pennsylvania and the state of New York*. By the end of 1800 the printing of this book was commenced, and Crèvecoeur was able to send the first proofs to his daughter in London. A letter from Mme. Otto to her father shows that they had had some hope of the book being published in England, where the *Letters* had first appeared; several booksellers became interested in the project, but when they learned that this was not an actual journey, in reality undertaken by the author, but rather a philosophical description of America, their interest cooled, and the plan had to be abandoned. The publisher, Maradan, at Paris, how-

⁷ *Voyage dans la haute Pensylvanie et dans l'État de New-York*, 3 vols.

ever, took the matter up, and the book finally made its appearance early in 1801.⁸

Baron Trouvé⁹ reviewed the *Voyage* and published two long extracts from it in the *Moniteur* (April 10, and April 12, 1801)^{10 11 12}, and Andrieux gave it a friendly notice in the *Décade*.¹³ This seems to have been about all the attention that the book received from the periodicals.¹⁴ Considering the enthusiasm excited by Crèvecoeur's earlier books, it is natural to inquire why this should have been the case. The *Voyage* was carefully written; it was a better piece of workmanship, in fact, than the *Letters* in either their French or their English dress. It is further recommended by valuable notes, several fair engravings, and an interesting portrait of Washington (to whom the book is dedicated) by Mme. de Bréhan. It contains an account of wanderings through various parts of New York and

⁸ See in the Boston Public Library, among the Chamberlain MSS., two letters (A. 4, 42) from Crèvecoeur to this publisher, written while the book was in press.

⁹ Charles-Joseph Trouvé, journalist and secretary of the Directory.

¹⁰ 25 and 27 germinal an IX.

¹¹ See the analysis of a letter in regard to the matter, from Trouvé to Crèvecoeur February 24, 1801, *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 399 and 400.

¹² Robert de Crèvecoeur says that it was Trouvé who persuaded Crèvecoeur to present a copy of his book to Napoleon and to the Institute (see the letter from Trouvé, March 16, and March 21, 1801, in *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 399 and 400).

¹³ *Décade philosophique, littéraire et politique*, 20 thermidor an IX (August 8, 1801).

¹⁴ The *Anti-Jacobin Review* (April to August, 1801), *The Monthly Epitome etc.* (January to December, 1801), and the *New Annual Register* for the year 1801, mention the *Voyage*, but these are mere notices. The *Annual Register* (p. 330) says the book "may be read with interest and pleasure," but suspects that imagination has supplied at least the coloring of the descriptions if not more, and that in many points we are to consider it as a composition between a history and a novel.

Pennsylvania, in which Crèvecoeur has woven stories of the early settlements of that region, and anecdotes of interest in regard to Indian councils, manners, and customs. The founding of colleges and other institutions in the country he traverses, the origin of the prehistoric mounds of Ohio, detailed description of the country about Niagara, of the country bordering upon the Hudson, glimpses of his former neighbors in Orange County — Jesse Woodhull, Roger Townsend, Robert Ellison, etc. — all contribute to the interest and value of these pages, giving them significance to the student of early American history and to the friends of their author, for all three volumes are shot with autobiographical material, which ought not to be ignored by those who wish to make Crèvecoeur's acquaintance.¹⁵ Yet in spite of the excellence of the book and the fame of the author, in spite of the genuine appreciation which the *Voyage* received from a few readers,¹⁶ there is no denying that it failed to interest greatly the generation of readers into whose hands it came. The length of the book — three volumes with many pages of finely printed notes; its cost — about six dollars in our money; the time of its appearance — after the Gallo-American enthusiasm had died away; all these causes may have to be considered in trying to account for its lack of popularity. To those who would have been specially interested in the subject, that is, American readers of that time, the language formed

¹⁵ It may seem strange to a reader who takes up the *Voyage* for the first time that more use has not been made of this material in trying to reconstruct Crèvecoeur's life. But while the book is of value in interpreting Crèvecoeur's experiences in the new world, it was not written with biographical intention and as a guide of that sort will prove untrustworthy unless it is read after a more circumstantial account of his life, and in the light of what is actually known of his career.

¹⁶ See a letter from Lafayette to Crèvecoeur, October 15, 1800, *Vie et Ouwrages*, p. 398.

an impediment. To French readers of that day the subject had somewhat lost interest. In point of style, too, it is disappointing; for while it contains careful writing, we shall look in vain in the *Voyage* for the freshness and charm of the *Farmer's Letters*; yet while it is a dead book with which we are dealing, it is a book whose resuscitation, we feel, would not be an altogether thankless task.¹⁷

The life at Lesches was darkened in 1806 by the death of Crèvecoeur's eldest son. Alexander seems to have been unusually gifted, and was beloved by all who knew him; he was idolized by his wife and by his father; "l'un et l'autre lui avaient voué une sorte de culte,"¹⁸ Robert de Crèvecoeur says. His premature death at the age of thirty-four saddened the rest of Crèvecoeur's life and made him glad to avail himself of the change from Lesches (so associated with his son's memory) offered by the frequently repeated invitation of Otto and his wife to join them in Munich. The story of Crèvecoeur's experiences in Munich, which his great-grandson has constructed from the many letters and memoranda remaining in his possession from this period, is very interesting. As the guest of the French minister, at this time high in favor, as an author, and also, as we must surmise from what we learn from his contemporaries, as an extremely agreeable and polished man, if a somewhat diffident one, Crèvecoeur was enthu-

¹⁷ It may be interesting to bibliophiles to know that a few copies of the *Voyage* were issued with especial care, with a larger-sized page, tinted maps, etc. One of these may be seen at the Connecticut Historical Society, one also, I think, at the Peabody Institute. There is a copy of the *Voyage* privately bound, at the American Antiquarian Society, which offers no clue to the original owner beyond a large Gothic "P" on the cover, surmounted by a horse's head, bridled, with a spear of wheat in its mouth. French and English books of heraldry have been examined without success to find a trace as to the possible owner of the book, who cared enough for it to have it bound so exquisitely.

¹⁸ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 231.

siastically received by the official circle, and himself sought out and greatly enjoyed the society of men of letters and of science, and the artists of that day, many of whom he has characterized in the memoranda and sketches which remain in the possession of the family. One of his most interesting reminiscences is his account of his meeting with Maximilian, King of Bavaria:

“Lundi dernier, M. de Fontenet, qui m’avait à plusieurs reprises invité à visiter les beaux appartements de la résidence royale, insista longtemps pour m’y faire aller ce jour-là et, quoique ma curiosité fut épuisée par tout ce que j’avais vu à Sleisheim, j’y consentis. Au lieu d’entrer dans les appartements d’en bas, à mon grand étonnement je fus conduit à ceux du second. . . . Nous arrivons à un longue galerie, . . . nous pénétrons dans une pièce. . . . En entrant, je vois un grand et bel homme, que je crois être le gouverneur du château, lorsque, s’approchant de moi avec une physionomie souriante, il me dit: ‘Monsieur de Crèveceur, vous ayant en vain invité, par l’entremise de M. Otto, à venir me voir à Nymphenbourg, . . . j’ai pris le parti de vous recevoir dans mon cabinet en simple particulier.’”¹⁹

The king showed Crèveceur his pictures, talked with him about his *Letters* which he had read both in English and in French, and later invited him to dine. There are numerous details about Maximilian among Crèveceur’s notes, for he seems at first to have been captivated by the monarch’s simplicity and kindly geniality. His notes tell us of one occasion when the king appeared at the door of the palace, bareheaded, to inquire the cause of the disturbance which he had observed. When he learned that it was a fire, he mounted his horse and rode at once to the scene of the catastrophe. Crèveceur was enchanted, too, to see the king on market-days walking among the peasants and conversing familiarly with them. But this enthusiasm waned upon a closer acquaintance with Maximilian, and Crèveceur, although always respectful in speaking of the

¹⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 235.

king and grateful for his kindness, became a less ardent admirer.²⁰

The three years²¹ spent in Munich were full of interest and activity. Crèvecoeur's notes at this time are voluminous, and touch upon almost every variety of subject. There are sketches of persons whom he met, conversations with artists, with men of learning, with inventors, accounts of visits to galleries, factories, mines. And as in the days of his consulship, Crèvecoeur did more than merely satisfy his curiosity; he did his utmost to spread the new ideas which he encountered by noting them fully, by writing numerous letters in regard to them to his friends in France, and by sending plans and models to make them still more clear. The fondness of the Bavarians for music seems to have greatly impressed him, and it is at this date that we find him devoting a treatise to the subject of music²²—fifteen pages of manuscript, half in the form of a monograph, half in the form of a letter to his daughter-in-law.²³ The Bavarians, he observed, had as a people great aptitude in all the arts; he felt that they deserved more encouragement than they received.²⁴ It is not surprising, knowing his valor as a champion, to find him pleading their cause with Maximilian whenever suitable opportunity offered.

But Crèvecoeur was not content to be a mere observer. He took advantage of the occasion of his stay in Munich to

²⁰ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 238.

²¹ 1806–1809.

²² "Réflexions sur la puissance et les effets de l'harmonie aérienne, adressées à Mme. Narcisse Saint-John . . ." (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 405).

²³ January 1, 1807.

²⁴ "Il y a ici un fond de talents qui ne demandent pour éclore qu'un peu d'encouragement. J'ai pris la liberté d'en parler au Roi, toutes les fois que j'ai pu convenablement introduire ce sujet" (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 246).

introduce there various devices and inventions with which he had become familiar. We find him, for example, inducing the Bavarians to experiment with washing by steam; he writes to a friend in 1805, with some satisfaction, "At the end of this month there will be more than thirty [steam washing] vats in this city."²⁵ The wife of the prime-minister, Montgelas, and the Baroness of Ghome were among his proselytes. As an agriculturalist we have already shown him preaching the method of fruit-culture advocated by Cadet-de-Vaux,^{26 27} and we learn that at this time also he made his experiments with potato-bread, according to Parmentier's formula. At Munich, too, we find him recommending the use of lightning-rods,²⁸ and trying to overcome the prejudice of the Bavarians against their use, in a long article in the *Munich Gazette*,²⁹ September 7, 1808. A complete list of Crèvecoeur's interests at Munich would be tedious to enumerate. Suffice it to say that whenever a new invention such as lithographing, or a novel occurrence like Garnier's balloon-ascension, or a new process like that employed at the salt-works at Reichenhall, offered opportunity, Crèvecoeur observed and noted the facts with an eager interest that rather surprises us when we remember that at this time he was nearly four score, that he was suffering from failing health, and that he was alone³⁰ in the world except for the daughter in

²⁵ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 250.

²⁶ Chapter X, p. 172.

²⁷ See *Revue Horticole*, 1882, p. 431.

²⁸ It will be remembered that he had persuaded a number of people in France to make use of these, and himself set up one in the courtyard of La-Roche Guyon, for his friend the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. The ship, too, on which he set sail for New York in 1783, was provided with a lightning-rod at his suggestion.

²⁹ The article is anonymous, but the original is in the possession of the family (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 250, note 3).

³⁰ Alexander's death had taken place before Crèvecoeur's departure for Munich, and Louis was with the army.

whose home he was always a welcome guest. Such energetic participation in the events of his day, under circumstances when men's thoughts more often turn inward, is the most illuminating commentary on the restless, curious, investigating nature of the man, who kept his hand steadily on the pulse of his time, notwithstanding his real diffidence and his conviction that he was unfitted for the life of affairs.

Crèvecoeur's notes follow step by step the triumphal march of the French army. In April, 1809, when the Austrians were only sixteen leagues from Munich, Otto sent his wife and daughter³¹ to Paris, under Crèvecoeur's care. From Paris Crèvecoeur went to Lesches, and in August of this year was settled at Sarcelles, a property which Otto had recently acquired. Otto was sent as ambassador to Vienna in 1809, and his wife went with him. Alexander's widow spent her winters in Normandy. So the last years of Crèvecoeur's life were at times lonely ones, but at Sarcelles he found opportunity for the pursuit of what at all times seems to have been his favorite occupation — farming, and the direction of Otto's estate. Here, too, he renewed his friendship with those whom he had known earlier in the valley of Montmorency. Conspicuous among these was the now aged Countess d'Houdetôt. The Senator Volney,³² the Abbé Grégoire, de Gouves — a very old friend, whom we have referred to before — and the family of Turpin de Crissé, were also of this circle. These years were filled with an active correspondence with friends outside of France, especially with the acquaintances whom he had made in Bavaria; some of the letters to these friends are quoted in whole or in part by Robert de

³¹ Sophie.

³² Robert de Crèvecoeur says that Crèvecoeur left extensive notes upon Volney's agricultural pursuits at this time (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 261, note 3).

Crèvecoeur.³³ In spite of his seclusion at Sarcelles, Crèvecoeur continued to follow with interest the movements in the world of science, and especially in the field of applied science. His notes testify fully to his absorption in these matters. In the year 1812 there are to be found among his memoranda the dimensions of a steam-boat, which Robert de Crèvecoeur believes, from the figures, to have been the *Clermont*. These he had probably received from Joel Barlow, who went to France in 1811 as minister from the United States. Barlow was a friend of old days, and an old friend, too, of Fulton, who, since he had visited France in 1802 and 1803 and made several experiments at that time on the Seine, was very possibly known to Crèvecoeur. That Crèvecoeur may have witnessed these experiments does not seem unlikely, for he had been in the United States at the time of some of the experiments of Rumsey and Fitch, and there is to be seen at the Library of Congress a correspondence of some length that passed between Crèvecoeur and Fitch³⁴ in the year 1788, relative to assistance which the consul hoped to be able to procure for the inventor from the French government.³⁵ Robert de Crèvecoeur comments on the satisfaction which Crèvecoeur must have felt at the final success of the invention to which he had contributed twenty-five years earlier.

Among the many correspondents of these last years none gave Crèvecoeur more pleasure than his granddaughter, Sophie Otto. Fanny's daughter seems to have combined her mother's gayety and charm with her father's

³³ *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 413, 414.

³⁴ I am indebted to Mr. Gaillard Hunt, chief of the Manuscript division, for calling my attention to this correspondence.

³⁵ A section of the Appendix of the *Vie et Ouvrages* (pp. 318-324) brings to light some of the efforts which Crèvecoeur made in order to gain recognition for Fitch.

intelligence. In addition she was the possessor of a radiant faith, which shed its light over her grandfather's last days, although he does not seem to have shared it.³⁶ At the nature of this correspondence we can only guess, because Robert de Crèvecoeur tells us that the intimate character of the letters forbade his quoting from them.³⁷ Sophie's marriage in 1812 to the Baron Pelet de la Lozère³⁸ was almost the last happiness that came to Crèvecoeur; for during the following year the Countess d'Houdetôt died and left him feeling very old and very lonely, and during this year and the one following, he felt unceasing anxiety on account of Louis, who in 1813 had taken part in the Russian campaign, and who was to endure all the horrors of the Retreat from Moscow. For three months nothing was heard from Louis; his reappearance in March was almost like a resurrection. Crèvecoeur, indeed, used this very word in speaking of it: "Louis' resurrection has made me ten years younger."³⁹

At the close of March, in spite of his years and fast-failing health, Crèvecoeur made a visit to Normandy, where he spent several weeks with the Marquise de Guenet, the sister of Alexander's wife. Here he experienced a sort of refreshing numbness, he says, after the sorrow and anxiety that had beaten upon him so sorely. In April he went to Paris to meet his daughter and his son-in-law, who had just returned from Vienna;⁴⁰ and in May he went

³⁶ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 272.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 274, note 2.

³⁸ Born 1785, died 1871. At the time of his marriage he was Auditor of the Council of State and General Superintendent of Crown forests. He was later made Deputy, then Prefect and a Peer of France, and twice minister under the government of July (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 275, note 1).

³⁹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 276.

⁴⁰ Upon his return to Paris Otto was made Minister of State. During the Hundred Days he was Sub-secretary of State at the Foreign Affairs Office. At the second Restoration he was exiled from Paris and obliged

back to Lesches, where his daughter's return and the brilliant victories which attended the French army at this time in some measure restored his spirits. At the end of this summer, which was ushered in by a springtime "the most glorious he had ever seen," Crèvecoeur returned to Sarcelles, where he succumbed in November to a weakness of the heart that dated from the exposure and hardship he had suffered thirty years before during his imprisonment at New York. Crèvecoeur had lived too quietly during the last ten years for his death to cause notice. It hardly even arrested for a moment the attention of the public.

"Crèvecoeur's personality," his great-grandson concludes, "is certainly not one of those which commands the admiration of posterity, but it has at least a right to its respect and esteem. He was absolutely honest, devoted to his country, intelligent, practical, a tireless popularizer, a sincere and well-intentioned writer, and he added to the good fortune of having done good in his day, the merit which was rare among his contemporaries, of having never done ill." Is not this the "faint praise" which we all have such good reason to dread? Possibly; but while it may be hard to add more to Crèvecoeur's eulogy, more can be said for the significance of his life. His seventy-eight years had for background such large events as the war in Canada, the American Revolution, the Reign of Terror, and the march of Napoleon's armies, all of which events are reflected to a greater or less degree in his writings. And among his friends were men of larger mould, who can be studied to advantage in the pages of his corre-

to retreat to a farm which he owned near La Fert-Milon, and later to Villers-Cotterets. It was only with great difficulty that he obtained leave to return to Paris a few years later, where he died in 1817 (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 277, note 1).

spondence.⁴¹ Not less interesting is it to note the progress of invention and discovery mirrored in his pages. Finally we believe that no man can share so largely in the life of his day at so many points, as did this man, without reflecting that epoch and helping us to understand it better, almost regardless of the interest or importance otherwise attaching to his name.

So much for what might be called his involuntary contribution. As a man of affairs and an artist we maintain that he deserves somewhat more than the scant and grudging recognition which has generally been accorded him. This is the first time that Crèvecoeur's services as consul have been emphasized and enumerated in detail, especially in the establishment and superintendence of the packet service and in the development of commerce between France and the United States, and much has been said here of his services as a disseminator of new ideas in the field of science; but this is far from the first time attention has been called to his merit as a writer. Before the appearance of the recent reprints of his first and best book, the *Letters from an American Farmer*,⁴² and increasingly since then, readers have come upon these pages with a kind of joyful surprise at finding a book so graphic and so readable surviving

⁴¹ Robert de Crèvecoeur, in the appendix to his biography, gives in whole or in part the substance of 90 letters that passed between Crèvecoeur and his correspondents. I have found indications of more than 178 other letters in various places, many of which remain entire; a few are merely noted as having been written. The principal collections, besides those which his great-grandson notes, are among the Franklin papers at the American Philosophical Society, among the Jefferson papers at the Library of Congress, the letters to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld at Mantes, the letters to and from William Short and John Fitch at the Library of Congress. To this may be added the Crèvecoeur papers at Bordeaux noted in the introduction, but as I have not seen these, I can not say speak definitely in regard to their contents.

⁴² Fox, Duffield, 1904; Everyman's Library, 1913.

from a period when "American Literature" was hardly more than budded, when its first faint fragrance was overlaid by the mustiness of theological lucubration and political debate. Although Crèvecoeur touched the life of his day at many points, and contributed directly and indirectly to the cause of progress in the eighteenth century; although no student of that century can afford to disregard that contribution; and although the historian will value his testimony in regard to larger men, and to public events of that time, the subject of this study will nevertheless be known, we are convinced, in time to come, not as M. de Crèvecoeur, the accomplished agriculturist, nor as Saint Jean de Crèvecoeur, consul from His Most Christian Majesty Louis XVI to the states of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, but as Hector Saint John, the author of the *Letters from an American Farmer*.

APPENDIX

ACTE DE NAISSANCE¹

*Extrait des registres des actes de baptême de la paroisse
Saint-Jean de Caen de l'an 1735.*

“Le mardi premier février mil sept cent trente-cinq, a été par nous, François Le Cornu, prestre, vicaire de la paroisse Saint-Jean de Caen, baptisé un fils né d’hier du légitime mariage de Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, écuyer, et de noble dame Marie-Anne-Thérèse Blouet et a été nommé Michel-Jean-Guillaume par Michel-Jacques Blouet, écuyer, seigneur et patron de Cahagnolles, trésorier de France et général des finances de Caen, assisté de noble dame Anne de Bourges, veuve de monsieur Blouet.

“Signé: de Bourges Blouet; Blouet de Cahagnolles; Le Cornu, vicaire.”

NATURALIZATION ACT

An act for naturalizing John Hector St. John, Johannes De Graaf, Elias Gerbeaux, William Musculus, Peter Olump, Hans Jury Merkwst, Johannes Casparus Rubell, Frederick Shurter, Peter Lumbardy, Frederick Sherrigh, John Ram, and John James Abbot.

Passed the 23d December, 1765.

Whereas the above-named Persons have, by their several Petitions presented to the General Assembly, desired that they may be naturalized, and become his Majesty’s liege Subjects, & Settlers in this Colony

¹ Robert de Crèvecoeur: *Saint John de Crèvecoeur, sa vie et ses ouvrages*, Paris, 1883, p. 284.

I. Be it therefore enacted by his Excellency the Governor, the Council, and the General Assembly, and it is hereby Enacted by the authority of the same, That the before-mentioned Persons, and each and every of them, shall be, and hereby are declared to be naturalized, to all Intents Constructions, and Purposes whatsoever; and from henceforth, and at all Times hereafter, shall be intitled to have and enjoy all the Rights and Liberties, Privileges and Advantages, which his Majesty's natural born Subjects in this Colony have and enjoy, or ought to have and enjoy, as fully to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever, as if all and every of them had been born in this colony.

II. Provided always, and it is hereby further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all and every, and each of the above-mentioned Persons, shall take the oaths appointed by Law, instead of the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, subscribe the Test, and make, repeat, swear to, and subscribe the Abjuration Oath, in any of his Majesty's Courts of Record within this Colony; which Oaths, the said Courts are hereby required, upon application to them made, to administer, take Subscriptions, and cause the Name of the Persons so swearing and subscribing, to be entered upon Record in the said Courts and the said before-mentioned Persons, are hereby each of them, required to pay the several Sums hereafter mentioned, that is to say; To the Speaker of the General Assembly the Sum of Ten Shillings, to the Judge of such Court, the Sum of Six Shillings; and, To the Clerk of such Court, the Sum of Three Shillings.

III. And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if the said Persons, or any of them, having so sworn and subscribed as aforesaid, shall demand a Certificate of his or their being entered upon Record in the manner herein before directed, the Court or Courts in which

such Oaths and Subscriptions shall be made, are hereby directed and required to grant such, under the hand of the Judge, and Seal of the said Court or Courts, in which such Oaths and Subscriptions shall be made, countersigned by the Clerk of the said Courts: For which Certificate each of them shall pay, over and above the Sums above mentioned, the Sum of Six Shillings; One-half to the Judge of such Court or Courts, and the other Half to the Clerk thereof. Which Certificate or Certificates shall be at all Times, to the Person or Persons therein named, a sufficient Proof of his or their being naturalized by Virtue of this Act, in as full and effectual a Manner, as if the Record aforesaid was actually produced by the Person or Persons so named in such Certificates.

IV. Provided also, and be it Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That such of the Persons hereby naturalized, as shall not take the Oath, Test and Abjuration, in Manner herein before directed, within twelve Months next after the Publication hereof, shall have no Manner of Benefit by this Act; any Thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

V. And be it Enacted by the same Authority, That the publick Printer of this Colony shall, and hereby is directed and required to print this Act, as if the same were a publick Act of this Colony.²

ACTE DE MARIAGE

“À tous qu’il appartiendra,

“Ceci est pour certifier que le vingt septembre 1769, en présence de M. Isaac Willett et de madame Margaret Willett, j’ai uni en légitime mariage M. Michel-Guillaume

² Taken from the *Laws of New York for the Year 1691 to 1773 inclusive*. Vol. II, N.Y. Hugh Gaine, 1774, pp. 481, 482.

Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, communément appelé M. Saint-John, natif de la Normandie, dans la vieille France, et Mehetable Tippet, du comté de Duchesse, province de New-York.

“En foi de quoi, j’ai sur le présent apposé ma signature et mon sceau, à West-Chester, les jour et an ci-dessus.

“Signé J. P. Tétard, N.D.M. et ci-devant pasteur de l’Église française réformée à Charles-Town, Caroline du Sud. En présence de. . . — Signé: Isaac Willett; Margaret Willett.”³

THE PURCHASE OF GREYCOURT

This Indenture made the Twelf Day of December In the Tenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God, of Great Britain France & Ireland Defender of the Faith &c. Annique Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty nine Between James Nesbit of Orange County Province of New York Planter, and Phebe his Wife of the one part and Hector St. John of Ulster County and Province of New York GENTLEMAN of the other part witnesseth that the said James Nesbit by and with the advice and Consent of the said Phebe his wife,

Signified by her being a party to and Sealing and Executing of these presents for and in consideration of the sum of Three Hundred & Fifty Pounds Currency Monney of New York To him in hand paid by the said Hector St. John of which he acknowledges the Receipt and Discharges the said Hector St. John Thereof forever — Hath Granted Bargained Sold Released Enfiefed and Confirmed and by these presents doth Grant Bargain Sell Release Enfeoff

³ Translated by Robert de Crèvecoeur from the English original in his possession, and printed on page 285 of *Vie et Ouvrages*.

and Confirm the said Hector St. John the same in his Possession Virtue of Bargain and Sale thereof to him made bearing date the Day before the Day of the Date of these presents for one year and by Virtue of the Statute for Transferring Uses into Possession and to his Heirs and Assigns forever — All that Tract of Land Lying and Being in the Patent of Waywayanda in the County of Orange and Province of New York and is part of a Farm or Tract laid out under Right of Daniel Crommeline known by the Name of Grey Court — Beginning at a Heap of Stones in the Northwest Corner of Josiah Gilbert's Eastern most Lott on which he lives in the North line of the said Crommeline's Tract — Thence running North Eighty Seven Degrees West as the Line of the said Tract runs to the Brook Twenty Six Chains To the said Gilbert Westernmost Lott then south along the said Lott Twenty Seven Degrees East to the River Seventy two Chains Thence Northerly as the River Runs about Twenty Chains to the first mentioned Lott North Twenty Degrees West forty nine Chains to the Place of Begining Containing One Hundred and Twenty Acres more or less Together with all Manner of Woods Underwoods Trees mines minerals Quarries Hawkings Huntings Fowlings, Fishings buildings Fences Improvements Hereditaments and Appurtenances whatsoever To the same belonging or in any wise appertaining and all the Estate Right Title Interest Possession Property Claim and Demand whatsoever of the said James Nesbit to the above bargained Premises and every Part and Parcel thereof TO HAVE AND TO HOLD The above bargained Premises to the Said Hector St. John His Heirs and Assigns to the sole and only proper Use Benefit and Behoof of the said Hector St. John his Heirs and Assigns forever and the said James Nesbit for himself and his Heirs doth Covenant Grant Bargain promise and agree to and

with the said Hector St. John his Heirs and Assigns that at the Time of ensealing and Delivery thereof he stands Lawfully Seized of the above bargained premises of a good Sure perfect absolute and Indefeazable Estate of Inheritance in the Law in the Fee Simple and that of the same are free and Clear from all former and other Grants Bargains Leases Releases Judgements Recognizances Mortgages and all other Incumbrances in the Law whatsoever and in the same in the Quiet and Peaceable possession of the same Hector St. John against all other persons whatsoever Claiming or to Claim any Estate Right Title or Interest therein or there to will forever warrant and Defend

. . . In WITNESS whereof the parties first above mentioned to these presents Have hereunto Interchangeably Set their hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written.

SEALED AND DELIVERED
IN THE PRESENCE OF

Israel Seely

Matthias Gilbert

James Nesbit L.S.

Phebe Nesbit L.S.

Received the Day and Year first written of and from the within named Hector St. John the Sum of Three Hundred & Fifty Pounds Current Monney of New York being the Consideration Money within mentioned to be paid to me —
James Nesbit

Orange County fs

Memorandum that on the ninth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty eight Personally came before me Elihu Marvin Esquire, one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, for the County of Orange Isaac Seely, and being by me duly sworn deposeeth and Saith that he signed his Name as a Witness

to the Execution of the within written Indenture and I haveing Examined the same and finding no material Erazures or Interlineations therein do allow the same to be Recorded—

Elihu Marvin

A true Record Entered at the Request of Hector St. John this Eighteenth Day of June 1798

Thos. Moffatt Clk⁴

Public Record Office
Colonial Office 5,
No. 115 fo. 25.
(old number AWI. 294. fo. 25)

“Un particulier de la Province de Normandie Supplie le Gouvernement d'Angleterre de lui procurer un Certificat de vie ou de mort du ci dessous denomme.

Celui dont on s'informe s'appelle Michel Guillaume Jean il s'est souvent de Crèvecoeur, il est Gentil homme originaire appelle de St. de Caen Capitale de la Basse Normandie; Jean ou de il est age de pres de 38 ans. Sa taille est Jean de 5 pieds 4 puces — il est tres bien fait de sa personne, bien campe et bien proportionnee.

Il est roux de cheveux, et portait autrefois perruque, il a la visage un peu long mais pourtant plein, la peau blanche mais extremement tachee de rousseurs; Il a les yeux beaux et bruns, les sourcils de meme et bien fournis, le front beau et bien ouvert, le nez un peu long; Les taches de rousseur qui sont de la petite espece, et Semblables a des brins de Son, s'etendent jusques sur les mains qui en sont remplies; Il les a asses grandes et plutot maigre qu'autrement.

⁴ In the office of the County Clerk at Goshen, Orange County, New York.

Expatrié depuis dix huit ans, il habite l'Angleterre depuis dix a onze; Il s'y etoit d'abord reclame de Mlles. Mutel, vieilles filles de 70 ans au moins, qui habitent la ville de Salisbury. par ces Demoiselles, il a connu des Particuliers qui ont des Etablissemens a Phyladelphia et en Pennsylvanie, et il habite cette Province de la nouvelle Angleterre dans la ville meme de Phyladelphie depuis huit a neuf ans. Il y etoit en qualite d'associe ou de Vice-Gerant d'un Negociant dont on ignore le nom et le genre de Commerce et les dernieres nouvelles que l'on a recues sont de l'annee 1767. Il doit savoir parfaitement l'Anglois, au moins il s'etoit annonce pour tel. On ignore s'il est marie, ou s'il l'a ete; On sait Seulement que peu de tems apres son arrive en Angleterre il a du epouser la fille unique d'un Negociant, qu'elle est morte avont d'etre maries, et que c'est cet evenement qui lui a procurer les interets qu'il a a Phyladelphie.

Des interets de famille considerables, exigent le Certificat qu'on demande, et qu'on espere qu'il sera accorde aux instances de M. L'Ambassadeur."

ACTE DE BAPTÊME

DES TROIS ENFANTS DE CRÈVECOEUR⁵

Ceci est pour certifier à tous ceux qu'il appartient, que le 27 décembre 1776, dans le comté d'Orange, province de New-York, j'ai administré le sacrement de baptême à América-Francès, née le 14 décembre 1770; à Guillaume-Alexandre, né le 5 août 1772, et à Philippe-Louis, né le 22 octobre 1774, fille et fils de M. Michel-Guillaume Saint-John de Crèvecoeur, autrement appelé M. Saint-John, et de Mehetable, sa femme, présentés l'un après l'autre par M. Verdine Elsworth et Dorothée Elsworth,

parrain et marraine. En foi de quoi, j'ai apposé ici ma signature et mon sceau, les jour et an susmentionnés.

Signé: J. P. Tétard, N.M.D. et pasteur de l'Église française réformée de New-York.

Verdine Elsworth; Dorothée Elsworth.⁵

New York 17 Feb 1779.

Sir

The diffusive Misfortunes of the Times is the only Introduction I have as well as the only Plea I can make for Writing you this—Like Great Many others I have rellinquished y^e Conveniencies of Life Property Servants &c, these Incidents however are now become so Common that I am very conscious they are less thought of; So many sacrifices of the same kind have been made that the Calamities of each Individual seems to be drowned in the general Mass yet they are not less felt by Each Sufferer; myself & Son are now become Refugees in this Town & find myself obliged to apply to you for the Indulg^{ce} of Rations for us both from this date, the only reward of 4 Years of Contumely Receiv^d, of Fines Imposed, Emprisonments &ce. the Enclosed Letters from Persons better known to you than myself will I hope Convince You that my Request is founded on Necessity & will enable you to Juge how far I am Justifyable in making this application

I Remain with Respect

Sir

Your very Humble Servant

Hector S^t. John

Addressed on the back To Col. Roger Morris

Endorsed on the back Received from M^r S^t John Thursday forenoon
18 March 1779.⁶

⁵ See *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 285.

⁶ From the Royal Institution at London, Volume 10, Number 114.

I have had the pleasure to be acquainted with M^r. S^t. John a number of years, and am happy in an opportunity of bearing testimony to his Character as a respectable inhabitant of this Province, a man of letters, and very accurate topographical knowledge of this country;

Should a particular state of this Province upon the North River be essential in any future views Government may have, I am convinced there are few more equal to give information and description that can be relied on than M^r. S^t. John.

During the Rebellion it is well known he has suffered much distress from the leaders of faction for his steady attachment to His Majesty's Government and friends; Which now oblige him to be a Refugee in this town with but little means of support; The indulgence he asks of rations for himself and Son from the time of their coming in, will be a great relief and worthily bestowed

W^m. Seton

Placing every confidence in M^r. Seton's report, I recommend M^r. S^t. John as worthy of the indulgence he asks

Andrew Elliot
Super^t. Gen.⁷

"I beg leave to recommend to you M^r. Hector S^t. John a Refugee from Orange County who has been here since the 17. of February. He has suffered much for his Loyalty and has left all his property behind him. This is the first time (and a time he little expected) That he has ever craved anything from Government But necessity now forces him to ask for aid, I must therefore take the Liberty of recommending him to you to obtain rations for himself & serv-

⁷ From the Royal Institution at London, Volume 10, Number 92. Letter not dated, but annexed to one from David Mathews bearing date March 17, 1779.

ant since their arrival here which I hope may meet with your approbation.

I am Sir

Your Humble S^t.

D Mathews ⁸

17 March 1779.

Col Morris"

SALE OF GREYCOURT

THIS INDENTURE Made this third day of May in the year of our Lord One thousand and Seven Hundred and Eighty five BETWEEN the Honorable Hector St. John Esquire Consul of his most Christian Majesty for the States of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey and now residing in the City of New York of the one part and Thomas Moffatt of the County of Orange of the other part — WITNESSETH that the Said Hector St. John for and in Consideration of the sum of Five Hundred Pounds Current money of the State of New York to him the said Hector St. John in hand well and truly paid at or before the ensealing and Delivery of these presents the Receipt whereof the said Hector St. John doth Hereby acknowledge and thereof and every part and parcel thereof doth acquit release and discharge the said Thomas Moffatt his Heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns forever by these presents Hath granted bargained Sold aliened released and Confirmed and by these presents Doth grant Bargain Sell aliene release and confirm unto the said Thomas Moffatt in his actual Possession now being by virtue of a Bargain and Sale to him thereof made for one whole Year by Indenture bearing date the Day be-

⁸ Addressed on the back Col. Roger Morris

Endorsed on the back 17. March 1779.

At the Royal Institution at London, Volume 10, Number 91.

fore the Day of the Date of these presents and by force of the Statute made for Transferring uses into Possessions and to His Heirs and Assigns. All that tract of Land lying and being in the patent of Waywayanda in the County of Orange in the State of New York and is part of a Farm or tract laid out under right of Daniel Crommeline known by the name of Grey Court — And in a certain Deed or Indenture thereof bearing Date the Twelfth day of December in the Year 1769 Made between James Nesbit & Phebe his wife of the one part. And the Said Hector St. John of Ulster County and province of New York Gentleman of the other part described to be bounded as follows to wit — Beginning at a heap of Stones in the North west Corner of Josiah Gilbert's Easternmost Lott on which he lives in the North line of the said Cromline's Tract thence runing North 87 degrees West as the line of the Said Tract runs to the Brook 26 chains to the said Lott 27 degrees East to the River 72 Chains thence North-erly as the River runs about 20 ch. to the first mentioned Lott of the Said Josiah Gilbert thence North along the said Lott North 20 degrees West 49 chains to the place of Begining Containing 120 A. more or less (which Said recited Deed or Indenture of Release is herewith delivered to the said Thos. Moffatt) TOGETHER with all Houses outhouses Edifices Buildings Orchards Gardens Lands Meadows Commodities Advantages Emolumens and Heredamens whatsoever to the Said Farm or Tract belonging or in any wise appertaining and the Reversion or Reversions Remainder and Remainders Rents Issues and Profits of all and Singular the said Premises and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtenances TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and Singular the said Farm or Tract of Land Hereditaments and premises above in and by these presents released and Confirmed and every part

Parcel thereof with the appurtenances unto the Said Thomas Moffatt his heirs and Assigns to the only proper Use and behoof of the said Thomas Moffatt his Heirs and assigns forever and to and for himself his Heirs, Executors and administrators doth Covenant grant Promise and agree to and with the said Thomas Moffatt his Heirs and Assigns that he the said Hector St. John now is the true Lawful and rightful owner above mentioned and of every part and parcel thereof with the appurtenances. AND ALSO that he the said Hector St. John at the time of the Sealing and Delivery of these Presents is lawfully and rightfully Seized in his own right of a good Sure perfect and Absolute and Indefeasable Estate of Inheritance in fee simple and in all and Singular the said Premises above mentioned with the appurtenances without any manner of Condition Mortgage limitation of uses other matter Cause or thing whatsoever to alter change charge and determine the same AND ALSO that the said Hector St. John hath good right full power and Sufficient authority in the law to grant Release convey and confirm all and Singular the Said Farm and Tract of Land Hereditaments & Premises above granted and Released with the appurtenances unto the said Thomas Moffat his Heirs and Assigns to the only proper Use and behoof of the said Thomas Moffat his Heirs and Assigns forever according to the interest and meaning of these presents AND ALSO that he the said Thomas Moffat his heirs and Assigns shall and may at all times forever hereafter peaceably and quietly have hold occupy possess and enjoy — all and Singular the said Farm and Tract of Land hereditaments and Premises aforesaid with the appurtenances and every part and Parcel thereof sans the lawfull let hurte trouble Hindrance Molestation Interruption or disturbance of him the said Hector St. John his Heirs or Assigns or of any other persons or persons

lawfully Claiming or to Claim by from or Under him them or any of them. AND that freed and discharged or otherwise well & Sufficiently saved kept harmless and Indemnified of from and against all former and other Gifts grants leases Mortgages Jointures dowers Uses Wills Entails fines Post fines Issues Amercements Seizures Bonds annuities writings Obligations Statutes Merchants and of the Staple recognizances Extents Judgements executions rents and arrearages of rents and from all of the other charges Estates Rights titles troubles and Incumbrances whatsoever had made committed done or suffered or to be had made Comitted done or Suffered by the Said Hector St. John or his Heirs or any other person or persons lawfully Claiming or to Claim by from or under him them or any or them AND LASTLY that he the said Hector St. John and his Heirs and all and every other person or persons haveing or lawfully claiming any Estate right titles Interest of in and to the said Farm and tract of Land and Premises or any part or parcel thereof by from or Under him or them and shall and will from time to time and at all times forever hereafter upon the reasonable request and at the proper Costs and Charges of the said Thomas Moffat his Heirs and Assigns make do acknowledge suffer Levy and Execute or cause and Procure to be made done acknowledged Levied Suffered and Executed all and every Such other and other act and acts thing and things decree and decrees conveyances and Assurances in the Law whatsoever for the further better and more Effectual Conveying Settling and Assuring, of all and Singular the Premises herein before mentioned or intended to be hereby granted and released with their and every of their rights members and appurtenances to the only proper Use and behoof of the said Thomas Moffatt his Heirs and assigns forever As by the said Thomas

Moffatt his Heirs and Assigns or his or their Council learned in the Law shall be reasonably advised or required —
IN WITNESS whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto Interchangeably Set their hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written

SEALED & DELIVERED

the words "the same as the 21st line being first Interlined the word "sent" and the word "and" being wrote on Erasure in the Presence of

[illegible] prevost
William Ireton

St John de Crevenecury [sic]

Received on the Day of Date of the within Indenture of the within named Thomas Moffatt the sum of 500 being the consideration money therein mentioned

St John de Crevecoeur

Witness

William Ireton

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on the 3rd day of May in the Year of our Lord 1785 personally came and appeared before me John Stoss Hobart Esquire one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the State of New York and the within named Hector St. John acknowledged the within Instruments to be his voluntary act and Deed for the use and purposes therein mentioned and having perused the same and finding no material erasure or Interlineation therein unnoticed by the witnesses do allow the same to be recorded

Jno Stoss Hobart

A true Record Entered at the request of Thomas Moffatt this 21st day of June 1791

Th. Moffatt Clk.⁹

⁹ In the office of the County Clerk at Goshen, Orange County, New York.

ACTE DE DÉCÈS

EXTRAIT DES REGISTRES DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL DE LA COMMUNE
DE SARCELLES, DÉPARTEMENT DE SEINE-ET-OISE

"Aujourd'hui treize novembre mil huit cent treize, neuf heures du matin, par-devant nous Desaisement (Pierre-Antoine), maire et officier public de l'état civil de la commune de Sarcelles, sont comparus les sieurs Daniel Boulière, chirurgien adjoint de la maison d'éducation d'Écouen, âgé de quarante-quatre ans, et Philippe Gérard, menuisier, âgé de trente-neuf ans, tous deux demeurant à Sarcelles; lesquels nous ont déclaré que Michel-Guillaume Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, né a Robehomme, près Caen, département du Calvados, âgé de quatre-vingt-un ans, fils de Michel-Augustin Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur et de dame Blouet Saint-Jean de Crèvecoeur, et veuf de Mehetable Trippet [sic], avec laquelle il a été marié dans le canton d'Orange, province de New-York, faisant partie des États-Unis de l'Amérique, est décédé hier, à sept heures du soir, audit Sarcelles, maison de monsieur le comte Otto, son gendre, de laquelle déclaration nous avons donné acte aux comparants qui ont signé avec nous après lecture fait.

"Signé au registre: Boulière, Ph. Gérard et Desaisement." ¹⁰

AGRICOLA PAPERS

Dec. 10, 1782. 1. Political Article.

(*Connecticut Courant*)

2. Sainfoin, lucerne, hyvernage and summer vetch.

(*Independent Journal*)

1784.

(*New York Gazette*)

Mar. 29, 1784.

(*Independent Ledger*) — dated "N.Y. Mar. 3."

April 29, 1784.

(*Massachusetts Spy*)

May 10, 1784.

(*Connecticut Courant*)

¹⁰ Taken from *Vie et Ouvrages*, pp. 286-287.

- May, 1784. 3. Potato Culture
(*Boston Magazine*)
- Dec. 2, 1784. 4. Enclosing and planting the "Fields."
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- Feb., 1785. 5. Husbandry
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
- Mar. 8, 1785. 6. Bill for support of the clergy &c.
(*Maryland Journal*)
- Nov. 16, 1785. 7. Controversial article vs. Publicola.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*) — dated Boston Nov. 5, 1785.
8. Burnet Grass.
(*Independent Chronicle*)
- April, 1786. (1st week) (Worcester Magazine)
- Aug. 28, 1786. 9. Potato Culture (not the same as "3").
(*New Jersey Gazette*)
1786. 10. Letter on Politics.
(*Connecticut Journal*)
- Oct. 9, 1786. Same Letter on Politics.
(*Connecticut Courant*)
- April 19, 1787. 11. Hessian Fly.
(*New York Journal*)
- April 24, 1787. (*Independent Gazetteer*)
- April 25, 1787. (*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- April 26, 1787. (*New Haven Mag. & Connecticut Gazette*)
- July 20, 1787. 12. Shearing Lambs.
(*New Haven Mag. & Connecticut Gazette*)
- July, 1787. (*Connecticut Journal*)
- July 30, 1787. (*Connecticut Courant*)
- July 30, 1787. (*Middlesex Gazette*)
- Aug. 2, 1787. (*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- August, 1787. (*Worcester Magazine*)
- (1st week)
- Sept. 27, 1787. 13. Grumbling about the weather.
(*Newport Herald*)
- Nov. 1, 1787. 14. Choice of members in the ensuing convention.
(*Independent Gazetteer*)

- Dec., 1787. 15. Sowing Corn.
(*Columbian Magazine*)
- April 23, 1788. 16. On founding agricultural societies.
(*Pennsylvania Gazette*)
- April 30, 1788. 17. Scarcity Root.
(*Phila. paper*)
- May 7, 1788. 18. Feeding Sheep.
(*Pennsylvania Gazette*)
- May 10, 1788. (*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- May 10, 1788. On founding agricultural societies (same as
"16").
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- May 14, 1788. Feeding Sheep (same as "18").
(*Independent Gazetteer*)
- June 9, 1788. Scarcity Root (same as "17").
(*American Mercury*)
- June 11, 1788. 19. Cotton, sunflower-oil and pomona wine.
(*Pennsylvania Gazette*)
- June 11, 1788. 20. Mint at Halle and salt-works.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- June 12, 1788. Cotton, sunflower-oil and pomona wine (same
as "19").
(*Independent Gazetteer*)
- June 19, 1788. (*New Haven Mag. & Connecticut Gazette*) —
dated Phil. June, 1788.
- July 3, 1788. (*United States Chronicle*)
- Oct. 22, 1788. 21. Maple wine, beer, vinegar, molasses, etc.
(*Pennsylvania Gazette*)
- Mar. 17, 1789. 22. Defense of governor of Massachusetts.
(*Herald of Freedom*)
- Mar. 20, 1789. Continued.
(*Herald of Freedom*)
- April 18, 1789. 23. On the revenue.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- May 6, 1789. (*Gazette of the United States*)
- May 14, 1789. (*New Haven Gazette*)

- Feb. 3, 1790. 24. Sowing Flax.
(*Connecticut Journal*)
- Feb. 10, 1790. (*New Jersey Journal*)
- Feb. 12, 1790. (*Hampshire Gazette*)
- Mar. 11, 1790. 25. Controversial article *vs.* Greenwichensis.
(*Newport Herald*)
- April 1, 1790. 26. Another of the same series.
(*Newport Herald*)
- May, 1790. 27. Notice accompanying report of Mr. Wm. Johnson of Frankford (Mar. 15, 1790) to Phil. Soc. for the Promot. of Agric. etc.
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
- June, 1790. 28. Review of the *New England Farmer*.
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
1790. 29. Harvest Beverages.
(*Federal Gazette*)
- July 22, 1790. (*Farmer's Journal*)
- Sept. 21, 1790. 30. Defense of Gen. Mifflin.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
1791. 31. Controversial article *vs.* Publicola.
(*Independent Chronicle*)
- July 6, 1791. (*New York Journal*)
- July 9, 1791. 32. Another of the same series.
(*New York Journal*)
- July 16, 1791. 33. Another of the same series.
(*New York Journal*)
- July 20, 1791. 34. Facetious article — "To the Economist."
(*Connecticut Journal*)
- July 23, 1791. (*Middlesex Gazette*)
- July 25, 1791. (*Farmer's Journal*)
- Sept. 13, 1791. 35. Facetious puzzle.
(*Salem Gazette*)
- Sept. 24, 1791. 36. Letter II. to the farmers, merchants . . . of
the U. S.
(*Independent Gazetteer*)
- Oct. 8, 1791. 37. Letter III. to the district of Phil. & Bucks Co.
(*Independent Gazetteer*)

- Sept. 15, 1792. 38. To George Latimer.
(*Independent Gazetteer*) — dated Aug. 31, 1792.
- Jan. 8, 1798. 39. Fecundity of the soil in the neighborhood of Elizabeth Town, addressed to the Sec. of the Agric. Soc. of New York.
(*American Universal Magazine*)
- May, 1800. 40. About wheat.
(*The Monthly Magazine & American Review*)
- October, 1800. 41. About fertilizing fields.
(*The Monthly Magazine & American Review*)
1801. Fecundity of the soil in the neighborhood of Elizabeth Town (same as "39").
(*Transactions of the Soc. for the Promot. of Agric. Arts, etc.*, dated Feb. 1798)
- [In pencil] 1804. 42. Address to the farmers of Pennsylvania on the Embargo Act.
(*Vol. II. Pamphlets belonging to the Gilpin Lib. of the Penn. Hist. Soc.*)
- March 30, 1805. Maple wine, beer, vinegar, molasses etc. (same as "21").
(*Evening Fireside or Literary Miscellany*) — from *New England Republican*.
43. Importance of Agriculture.
(*Raleigh Register*)
- Nov. 3, 1817. (*Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser*)
- Dec. 22, 1817. Same, but fuller.
(*Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser*)

Article on the introduction of certain new grasses into the United States. Written by St. John de Crèvecoeur under the pseudonym of *Agricola*.

Reprinted from the *New York Independent Journal*, March 3, 1784, by the request of "A Constant Reader," May 10, 1785, in the *Connecticut Courant*.

“Whilst Senates and Assemblies are promulgating laws and framing ordinances; whilst merchants are looking out for new branches of trade; whilst every class of citizens in the towns are busily employed in repairing the wrecks of war; will an honest individual be permitted to ask, why, amidst this grand renovation of things, there are no means sought after, no encouragement held out, no salutary laws enacted to revive, to strengthen and to perfect among us that first of all arts, that primordial invention, Husbandry, now drooping and neglected?

However captivating the sight of ships may be, however pleasing the bustle of a great commercial city, yet it must be confessed that the only source of national prosperity is the Cultivation of the Land; the greatest degree of the prosperity is the utmost perfection of making the earth produce.

The parching heats to which this country is exposed, often occasions a want of summer pastures, as well as of winter fodder: It is therefore of the utmost moment that the American cultivators should be informed that the artificial meadows constitute one half of the rural riches of Europe. Whilst they strengthen the hands of the Farmers, by multiplying their means of keeping horses and cattle, these grasses at the same time enrich their lands, and enable them almost constantly to bear without danger of being exhausted. Why should not the same means be adopted here? Strongly impressed with the useful consequences which would result to the welfare of this country farmers, from the knowledge and introduction of artificial grasses, I have thought it my duty to publish the following observations.

Any one of the farmers of this, or the neighboring states, inclined to try the effects of these artificial meadows, and who may be desirous for that purpose to procure some of the seed, may have the quantity they shall require from Normandy by applying to the Consul of France's office; and

they may depend that no other than the first cost (which is very low) together with the land carriage from Caen to Port L'Orient, shall be demanded: It being his Majesty's intentions that the Packets shall bring out whatever may be useful to the citizens of America, in arts sciences and husbandry, free of freight and every other expense.

On the cultivation of Sainfoin, Lucerne, Hyvernage, and Summer Vetch.

There are two kinds of meadows, the natural and the artificial. Every one knows that the former are always situated on low and damp soils, the latter on dry grounds. There are three species of plants fit to make artificial meadows, clover, Sainfoin and Lucerne. Clover grows almost on every soil where it is naturally good; but it is far from being healthy, for although this rich food fattens cattle, yet it heats them overmuch, and when given dry to horses in the winter, it is apt to bring on very dangerous coughs; nevertheless clover is extremely beneficial to the land, as it produces a most useful rest.

Sainfoin (which is wholesome hay) is one of the most valuable grasses known, and used for artificial meadows it yields a salubrious and delicate fodder; equally good green or dried, but all soils do not suit its growth: Sainfoin should be sown on high, light, stony & dry grounds; those which abound most with small pebbles stones and flints, are the fittest for that plant: This crop is ripe in July. Its maturity is easily known by the seeds ceasing to adhere to the pods; then it must be mowed, left to wilt on the ground two or three days, carefully taken up and thrashed (I mean that part from which the seed is expected) which as soon as it is fanned and cleaned, must be carefully spread on a floor to prevent its heating, & after eight or ten days carefully put into bags.

Sainfoin bearing equally the frosts of winter, and the heats of summer, may be sown with barley, the beginning of April. The French arpent contains 100 square perches, each perch 22 feet, and each foot 12 inches; and 5 bushels of seed are required to sow an arpent. The ground cannot be too well prepared by ploughing; barley must be sown first, and then the sainfoin; when the former is ripe it should not be reaped or cradled as close as usual, on account of the tender plants of the latter, which are not now to be mowed until June following; this new crop must be kept the first year from the mouth of cattle, and ever afterward from that of sheep. If the soil is suitable, Sainfoin will last four years, and produce four crops without any manure; each arpent will bring from 150 to 300 bundles of 15 lbs. each, equal to 2 tons.

The second method of sowing it, is the latter end of September, or the beginning of October; this must be done with rye, which it is necessary to sow thinner than barley — Sainfoin never fails of bringing yearly an excellent after-grass. The best known for milch cows. Nothing can be compared to the beauty of a field covered with this luxuriant plant, when it is in full blossom. N.B. The part intended for seed must be cut somewhat later.

Sainfoin procures the earth a most beneficial rest, which is evident by the abundant crops of grass which broken up Sainfoin grounds always bear for years after.

Lucerne is a plant much more delicate, and difficult in the choice of its proper ground: It requires a deep, warm, sandy, loamy soil; in the neighborhood of Paris it thrives on fields of pure sand. The sea sands are still better adapted to the prosperity of this plant. According to the seasons it yields three or four crops. The only art required to make it flourish is to spread on it before winter a good coat of dung, or sea-weeds. Many fields of Lucerne

in the neighborhood of ——— on the sea-shores have lasted upwards of twenty years. It is fitter for cattle than horses. The seed is so small that it must be mixed with ashes before sowing; to procure it when ripe the same care and attention as for that of Sainfoin.

Hyvernage. This species of Vetch is so called, on account of its bearing the severities of the winter. It is committed to the ground about seed-time, on well-dunged land, intended for wheat the following season. As soon as it has reached two feet in its growth it is daily cut and given in a manger to cattle and horses; they are very fond of it. This rich provender fattens them and enables them to work harder than usual without the assistance of grain.

The Spring Vetch is sown in the usual season of oats: as it ripens somewhat later than the Hyvernage it procures the farmer an happy succession of green fodder, and a great quantity out of a small piece of ground. If Vetches are wanted for the winter, they are mowed like peas, and tied up in bundles.

It takes four bushels of seed to sow an acre; As soon as this crop is carried off, the ground is ploughed and sowed with wheat, which always proves heavy and excellent.

AGRICOLA."

AGRICOLA

THE starting-point of the inquiry as to what extent Crèvecoeur made use of this nom-de-plume is a letter written to Mme. d'Houdetôt from New York, March 20, 1789,¹¹ in which he speaks of having "dès l'année 1783, prêché dans les gazettes de ce pays sous la signature d'Agricola; d'avoir fait connaître et enfin d'y avoir introduit le sainfoin, la luzerne, les vêches, le vignon, et depuis deux

¹¹ *Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 380.

ans la racine de disette, qu'on commence à cultiver dans plusieurs États." That Crèvecoeur contributed to American gazettes under the name of Agricola is established by the letter above; but this does not dispose of all the papers so signed, for if we examine these articles from the year 1783 to 1789, and later (for the letter does not suggest when Crèvecoeur's series closed), we are led to believe that more than one writer is responsible for their authorship. The problem is to decide which of the rather large number of these papers can be assigned to Crèvecoeur.

In December, 1782, a political article appeared in a Hartford paper,¹² signed Agricola. It can hardly have been Crèvecoeur's, since at that time he was in France, and not likely, at such a distance and after more than two years absence from America, to be contributing on a political subject to an American paper. Yet, though the article is probably not Crèvecoeur's, it should be noted, because it introduces a contributor whose claim to some of the papers which follow may have to be considered. While the letter to Mme. d'Houdetôt does not specify what the articles bearing the signature of Agricola dealt with, the implication, from what follows, is that they were mainly concerned with agricultural matters. For this reason and from the tone of the papers themselves, we may conclude that, although the consul kept closely informed on political matters, as his correspondence shows, the Agricola of the political papers is not often to be identified with Crèvecoeur.

During the first year of his consulship (that is, 1784, for only six weeks of 1783 were left by the time Crèvecoeur arrived at New York), three articles appeared, signed by Agricola, one of which is certainly his,¹³ as are perhaps the other two also. The first, recommending the culti-

¹² *Connecticut Courant*, Dec. 10, 1782.

¹³ It is reproduced on pages 326-330 of the Appendix.

vation of sainfoin, lucerne, hyvernage, and summer vetch for artificial meadows, in accordance with methods used abroad, appeared in a New York paper, March 3, 1784.¹⁴ After a somewhat rhetorical introduction in which it is asserted that the only source of national prosperity is the cultivation of the soil, the writer says that he feels it his duty to publish certain observations which follow. Farmers desiring to profit by the suggestions he offers may have as much seed as they require, from Normandy, "by applying to the Consul of France's office; and they may depend that no other than the first cost (which is very low) together with the land carriage from Caen to Port L'Orient shall be demanded: It being his Majesty's intention that the Packets shall bring out whatever may be useful to the citizens of America in arts, sciences and husbandry, free of freight and every other expense."

The second *Agricola* paper of 1784 can not so certainly be assigned to Crèvecoeur. The *Boston Magazine* in May published over this signature an article on potato-culture. There is nothing in the two columns to prove his authorship of them, but the subject is one on which he had published a pamphlet¹⁵ two years before in France, and it is noteworthy that during the spring of this year Crèvecoeur was in Boston, so that it seems very possible that he may have been the contributor. "If this should prove acceptable," the writer says, "you may hear further from *Agricola*." Apparently it was, for in November *Agricola* wrote from New York, submitting a plan for embellishing and planting the "Fields," now known as City Hall Park.¹⁶ This contribution is certainly from Crèvecoeur, for in the

¹⁴ *Independent Journal*, according to a re-print in the *Connecticut Courant*, May 10, 1785.

¹⁵ *Traité de la culture des pommes de terres*, Caen, 1782.

¹⁶ *Pennsylvania Packet*, Dec. 2, 1784.

spring of this year he had written to Chancellor Livingston, recommending the planting of trees on this spot, volunteering to share in the expense that would be involved in carrying out his suggestion, and offering further to provide trees for the Battery as well.¹⁷ A letter written a few days later thanks Livingston for his kind reception of his letter, and proposes that the park be surveyed as the first step towards its improvement. If the planting of the trees alone were all that should be accomplished this year, the effect would induce many people next year, he thinks, to raise a sufficient sum for the purpose of enclosing the whole with a "plain & decent Railing."¹⁸ The paper signed by Agricola repeats in the main the propositions contained in Crèvecoeur's letter to the Chancellor. It explains that this plan had been proposed fifteen years earlier (a fact to which allusion is made in the letter also), and points out that the present is a favorable time for its execution. It proposes, in addition, that the name of "Washington Mall" be given to the park, and suggests that a fountain would add greatly to its attractiveness. The recommendations which this short paper contains are practical, and some of them were carried out later, as can be seen from Dr. Mitchell's description of this spot in 1807,¹⁹ which includes a reference to the "Beautiful grove"^{20 21} in front of the City Hall.

¹⁷ See page 119.

¹⁸ See page 119.

¹⁹ *The Picture of New York etc.*, published in 1807 at New York, by I. Riley, is anonymous, but a copy at the Johns Hopkins Library is signed "By Sam. L. Mitchel" in pencil on the fly-leaf.

²⁰ Page 2: "The park is a piece of enclosed ground situated between Broadway and Chatham St., in front of the new City Hall. The area consists of about four acres, planted with elms, planes, willows and catalpas, and a surrounding foot-walk is encompassed with rows of poplars."

²¹ See too, *New York Old and New*, II:180: "The Fields laid the

There is only one paper by Agricola in 1785 that suggests Crèvecoeur's authorship. The one entitled "Husbandry," which the *Massachusetts Magazine* printed in February, may very possibly be his, but this cannot be affirmed. The one which appeared on the eighth of March in the *Maryland Journal* on the support of the clergy leads one to think that it was written by a resident of that state. Moreover, the subject is not one in which Crèvecoeur interested himself so far as we know. In the summer of 1785 Crèvecoeur went to France on a leave of absence, so that the controversial letter addressed to Publicola in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, November 16, 1785, dated from Boston earlier in the month and signed by Agricola, cannot be attributed to our author.

A letter from Crèvecoeur to Governor Bowdoin on the subject of artificial grasses, in July, 1786, makes it seem likely that the Agricola paper on Burnet Grass, which appeared in the *Worcester Magazine* the first week in April, is his. The subject is one in which he was interested, and in which he had considerable success in interesting others. He says in closing, "It is to be hoped that the honorable gentlemen who have been chosen by the Academy of Arts and Sciences to make experiments in agriculture will not refuse their attention to the above subject." In view of the correspondence between Crèvecoeur and Bowdoin on this subject, and of Bowdoin's connection with the society referred to, Crèvecoeur's authorship of the paper seems probable.

There are several reasons why the paper on potato-culture signed by Agricola, which appeared in August in the *New Jersey Gazette* (Aug. 28th), should be consid-

ground for its present name in 1785, when it was enclosed with a post-and-rail fence, which soon gave way to one of wooden palings, and this in 1816 to an iron railing."

ered Crèvecoeur's. The subject is one about which he was well-informed.²² There is nothing in the paper that could not have been said appropriately by him. It is introduced by the usual modest waste of words which he commonly found necessary in order to launch his subject, and concludes with the closely packed details which abound in Crèvecoeur's writing on such themes. A short preface signed by Timothy Pickering, secretary of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, indicates that it is printed at the desire of the society, just as Crèvecoeur's article on Indian corn was recommended later to the gazettes by the Academy of Arts and Sciences. The date and place of writing, "Phila. July 4, 1786," must be read as the time and place at which Timothy Pickering wrote his preface enclosing the article,²³ if we are to consider it as Crèvecoeur's, for at that time he was still in France. A "Letter on Politics," borrowed from a New Haven paper²⁴ by a Hartford paper²⁵ in October of this year, is addressed "to the inhabitants of Connecticut" and signed Agricola. Crèvecoeur, as has been stated, had been made a citizen of New Haven in September, 1784, and received the same honor from Hartford in March, 1785. Trumbull in New Haven and Wadsworth at Hartford were both among his friends,²⁶ and either might have sent his letter to the press. It is conceivable that Crèvecoeur should have thus felt called upon to address the inhabitants of Connecticut, whom he

²² See Chap. X, p. 161.

²³ Pickering's journey to Wyoming (Penn.) in 1786 did not take place until August, consequently it is both possible and likely that he was in Philadelphia at the time specified. See C. W. Upham's *Life of Timothy Pickering*, 1893, II:267.

²⁴ *Connecticut Journal*.

²⁵ *Connecticut Courant*, October 19, 1786.

²⁶ Trumbull and Wadsworth were both among the guests at Frances Crèvecoeur's wedding (*Vie et Ouvrages*, p. 163).

might with some right claim as fellow-citizens, but as before in the case of the political paper of December, 1782, in the *Courant*, the unlikelihood of Crèvecoeur's writing on American politics for an American journal when at such a distance of time and place²⁷ from American affairs makes his authorship of the article seem questionable. It is more probable that we are here dealing with a New Englander, who is responsible for both articles in these Connecticut papers, and perhaps also for the controversial papers on politics which were published in the gazettes by Agricola in answer to those of Publicola.

The following year, 1787, the year of Crèvecoeur's return to his post at New York, gives us three Agricola papers which may be his, and another of the political series. The first to appear was on the Hessian Fly, the scourge of farmers of that day. It was re-printed three times²⁸ within the month by out-of-town papers, from the *New York Journal* of April 19th. After describing the insect and its manner of devastating wheat-fields, the writer speaks of a variety of wheat not injured by this pest, which can be obtained through a mill-owner on Long Island. There is nothing in the paper to lead one to conclude with any certainty that it is Crèvecoeur's, though the final sentence may be significant: "I have been told that this insect is described and the method of preventing its pernicious operation related in the French Dictionary entitled *Encyclopédie*,²⁹ which I could wish to see translated in your paper." The paragraph of July 20th, on sheep

²⁷ He had returned to France in June, 1785.

²⁸ { *Independent Gazetteer*, April 24, 1787.

²⁸ { *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 25th.

²⁸ { *New Haven Mag. & Conn. Gazette*, April 26th.

²⁹ *Encyclopédie Méthodique* . . . , Pancoucke et Agosse, Paris, 1782-1783.

shearing,³⁰ copied four times³¹ in less than a month, is signed by Agricola but presents no striking characteristics. There may be some interest in the fact that another short article on sheep-raising was published by Agricola in 1788, but it has no importance in helping us to assign an author for either.

A rather quaint little essay appeared in the *Newport Herald*³² in September, introduced by Agricola, arraigning those given to the very general practice of complaining of the weather. "This [the weather] as being of general concern to every inhabitant of the earth, is seized on as a common property to supply the sterility of invention, and, in a climate like ours, of which the ruling characteristics are gloom and moisture, affords a never-failing fund of mutual complaint." The foregoing sentence leads one to think that the essay may have been written by a dweller under other skies than those of America. Furthermore the thought flows rather more freely and is expressed more idiomatically than is the case in the papers by Crèvecoeur which have been already examined. The sentiments, however, might have been his own, for they call to mind the spirit of the "American Farmer." The sentence following might well have been written by the author of Letter II, "On the situation, feelings and pleasures of the American Farmer":

"The genial breath of spring, and the ripening heats of summer, should soften his [the farmer's] heart and expand it with the most lively affections; the profusion of autumn should excite his gratitude, and there is in the winter a grandeur that should intimidate complaint."

³⁰ *New Haven Mag. & Conn. Gazette.*

³¹ { *Conn. Journal*, July, 1787.
Middlesex Gazette, July 30, 1787.
Worcester Magazine, first week in August.
Pennsylvania Packet, August 2, 1787.

³² *Newport Herald*, September 27, 1787.

This recalls the fine description of the coming of winter to the Mohawk Valley in the first volume of the French edition of 1787.³³

An impression has perhaps been given that articles of a political nature, signed by Agricola, cannot be ascribed to Crèvecoeur. It will be remembered that those which have been discussed appeared at a time when Crèvecoeur's distance from this country made it seem unlikely that he could have been their author. In November of 1787³⁴ an article on the choice of members for the ensuing convention was printed in the *Independent Gazetteer*. Crèvecoeur was in this country at the time, and his correspondence at this epoch shows deep interest and concern in American politics. Writing to the Duke of Harcourt the twenty-seventh of July, he speaks of the convention then holding its sessions in Philadelphia. His explanation of the importance of this meeting is of great interest and confirms M. Hippeau's characterization of Crèvecoeur as "a rarely intelligent observer."^{35 36} On the ninth of November a letter to Jefferson from Crèvecoeur,³⁷ entirely devoted to politics, says: ". . . old as I am I cou'd even fight for the admission of this new foederal gov: — now or never. — if this new constitution fails I will do everything in my Power to Leave this country which will become the scene of anarchy and confusion." While the two columns of the article on the choice of members for the convention cannot be proved to be Crèvecoeur's, the former reason for denying the probability of his authorship

³³ II:289.

³⁴ November 1, 1787.

³⁵ Hippeau: *Gouvernement de la Normandie*, III:138.

³⁶ A note by the French historian states that Washington and General Knox furnished Crèvecoeur with most of the facts which he reports in this letter.

³⁷ Jefferson Papers, series 2, vol. 74, no. 6, Library of Congress.

of Agricola papers which have to do with political matters — his absence from this country — has been removed, and in favor of his pretensions, his increasing interest in American affairs is adduced.

A paper in the *Columbian Magazine* for December, 1787, on sowing corn, reminds us of Crèvecoeur's communication to Governor Bowdoin which appeared in July in the *Massachusetts Centinel* ("The Cultivation and Use of Indian Corn as Fodder"), and displays characteristics, too, of other papers by Agricola which suggest Crèvecoeur's authorship — a leisurely introduction leading up to practical suggestions based on his own observations (though not always his own experience), offered in the tone of one who writes merely as a public servant.

In April of the following year Agricola advocates the establishment of societies for the promotion of agriculture and manufactures throughout all the counties of Pennsylvania, such as those at Philadelphia.³⁸ The duties of such societies are discussed, and the advantages they would bring. An idiom at this point suggests a foreigner as the writer: "They would moreover serve by bringing persons of different sects and parties together, and thereby add greatly to the social and personal happiness." The opening sentence may perhaps lead one to conjecture that the writer of this paper is the same as that of November in the preceding year on the choice of members for the convention: "As the general ratification of the foederal constitution now seems to be reduced to a certainty, it becomes us to turn our attention to those subjects which alone can render the new government effective."

An article published April 30th, "by a Philadelphia paper," according to the *American Mercury*, June 8, 1788,

³⁸ *Pennsylvania Packet*, April 23, 1788.

on the uses of the scarcity root,³⁹ a variety of beet-root which Crèvecoeur called by the name of "racine de disette," may be noticed here. It is practical and prosaic, without sufficient distinction in idiom or manner of treatment to enable us to attribute it certainly to Crèvecoeur; but there is nothing to preclude his having written it, and furthermore the subject is one on which he had already contributed to the gazettes,⁴⁰ so that it may be included tentatively among his contributions.

The same journal for May 7th printed directions for feeding sheep, in which reasons are given why a small amount of corn added to their diet in winter will produce good results. This recalls Crèvecoeur's suggestions on the use of Indian corn as fodder, already referred to. The opening sentence, "It has been often remarked that the American sheep yield much less than the sheep of Britain, France and Spain," suggests the possibility of the paper's having been written by some one of European experience, corresponding to Crèvecoeur's, but neither this nor Agricola's paper in July of the preceding year on the same subject offers any strong evidence in regard to authorship.

In June the *Pennsylvania Gazette* (June 11th) offered a long communication from Agricola on "American Manufactures," which discussed the cotton-supply and the making of sun-flower oil and pomona wine. Crèvecoeur's correspondence of 1788 is all dated from New York, so that the heading of the article, "Phila. June 1788,"⁴¹ casts some doubt upon his being the writer. It does not entirely dispose of the possibility, however, as he may have been to Philadelphia in that month, even though no corre-

³⁹ Mangel-wurzel.

⁴⁰ See his letter to Mme. d'Houdetôt, page 162, note 2.

⁴¹ This heading appears in the re-print of June 19, 1788, in the *New Haven Magazine and Connecticut Gazette*.

spondence remains to prove it.⁴² The article, which is of some interest, suggests that cotton enough may be raised in the southern states, not only to clothe every citizen in America, but half the inhabitants of Europe. There is nothing in the paper to prevent our thinking Crèvecoeur its writer, nor anything on the other hand to indicate it.

On the same day ⁴³ there appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel* an extract from *Reystler's Travels through Germany &c.* in 1729, describing the mint at Halle and the salt-mines in that neighborhood. It is submitted with a short introductory paragraph signed by Agricola, somewhat unidiomatic in expression, but not specifically characteristic of Crèvecoeur.⁴⁴

The last article by Agricola in 1788 is dated October 22nd.⁴⁵ It is devoted to the uses of the sugar-maple, a subject often referred to by Crèvecoeur in the *Voyage*,⁴⁶ one to which his attention was possibly first called during his wanderings in Vermont in 1764,⁴⁷ and one with which he became further familiar during later experiences in Pennsylvania and in New York.⁴⁸ The writer of the article makes no claim to the discovery of the receipts he gives for making maple-sugar, maple beer, maple molasses, maple wine, and maple vinegar. They were obtained,

⁴² A letter from Washington to Madison (Letter-Book 1788, Lib. of Cong.) rather suggests that he had spoken to Crèvecoeur in Philadelphia earlier in the year.

⁴³ June 11, 1788.

⁴⁴ It was re-printed in the *Independent Gazetteer*, June 12, 1788; in the *New Haven Mag. & Conn. Gaz.*, June 19th; in the *U. S. Chronicle*, July 3rd.

⁴⁵ *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

⁴⁶ *Voyage*, I:71; I:373-374; II:402.

⁴⁷ Referred to in his letter to the duke of Harcourt in 1787 (Hipeau, *Gouv. de Normandie* III:137).

⁴⁸ There were sugar-works at Goshen, near his home in Orange County (*Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, ed. Dexter, III:121).

he explains, with some difficulty from persons who have succeeded in their manufacture. The paper has the general characteristics of most of those signed by Agricola which have to do with farm matters, and I am induced to think it is Crèvecoeur's because of its conformity to the type set forth in the Agricola paper on the use of artificial meadows, which we have such strong reasons for believing to be his.

A long defence of the governor of Massachusetts appeared in a Boston paper, *The Herald of Freedom*, signed by Agricola, March 17, 1789, and was continued in the number which came out three days later. There is no strong evidence for claiming these or rejecting them as Crèvecoeur's; nor can we decide whether or not he is the author of the paper on the revenue which came out April 18th, in the *Pennsylvania Packet*. The phrasing is rather more vigorous and idiomatic than Crèvecoeur's usually was. In May ⁴⁹ the *Gazette of the United States* re-printed it and in the same month it was copied by the *New Haven Gazette*.⁵⁰

It is probable that Crèvecoeur's last words as Agricola were uttered in 1790, the year of his return to France. During the ten years which followed, a number of papers appeared over that name, but they are chiefly devoted to politics, or contributed by writers evidently on the spot, or of such a nature as to make it seem unlikely that Crèvecoeur was concerned in them. In February the *New Jersey Journal* ⁵¹ quoted from the *Connecticut Journal* a short article on sowing flax, which may be his. The concluding sentence, "If this hint should prove of any service to those who cultivate flax, I should think this not written in vain,"

⁴⁹ May 6, 1789.

⁵⁰ May 14, 1789.

⁵¹ February 10, 1790.

is in the manner of the foregoing papers which have given indications of being Crèvecoeur's.

March 11th of this year gives us Agricola's controversial article against "Greenwichiensis," and on the first of April, the same paper printed another of the same series. These do not suggest Crèvecoeur's hand, but that of May, 1790, in the *Massachusetts Magazine*, advocating the establishment of agricultural societies,⁵² is quite possibly his. The beginning recalls the opening sentences of many of the papers which seem likely to have been Crèvecoeur's:⁵³ "Everything that has a tendency to promote the interests of agriculture should be applauded and imitated." Compare with this the *Independent Journal* early in March, 1784,⁵⁴ ". . . why are no salutary laws enacted to revive, to strengthen and to perfect among us that first of all arts, that primordial invention, Husbandry, now drooping and neglected."⁵⁵ The resemblance is not of course verbal, but the method of introducing a particular suggestion by a large reference to the general subject to which it belongs is the same in all three instances. Crèvecoeur's letter to Governor Bowdoin, referred to in considering the Agricola paper of April 23, 1788,⁵⁶ may be recalled in connection with this paper.

Whether an appreciative notice in June, 1790, of Samuel Deane's *New England Farmer or Georgical Dictionary*⁵⁷ (published in that year) can be attributed to Crèvecoeur

⁵² There were at this time "The Phil. Soc. for promoting Agric.," established 1785, one at Charleston, S. C., organized in the same year, one at Kennebec, founded 1787, and one in Kings Co., Nova Scotia, in 1789. The following year the New York Society was formed, and the Massachusetts Society followed in 1792 (*Encyc. of Amer. Agric.* 1909, IV: 291).

⁵³ *Newport Herald*.

⁵⁴ This is from the paper on sainfoin, etc.

⁵⁵ See also the *New Jersey Gazette*, August 28, 1786.

⁵⁶ Page 343.

⁵⁷ *Massachusetts Magazine*.

is hard to say. It strongly suggests an author who was familiar with the foreign compilations on this subject, and Crèvecoeur's connection with various French agricultural societies at least placed him in a position to know the important contributions on the subject in France. But further than that the notice may well have been his, it would be hazardous to say.

He may also have been the author of the paper on harvest beverages which appeared in the *Farmer's Journal*, July 22, 1790, copied from the *Federal Gazette*. The suggestions submitted are based on what the writer has learned from his friends—a method of introduction to which we have become familiar in Crèvecoeur's agricultural papers. They are also seasoned with a dash of rhetoric, somewhat in his manner although surpassing anything we have hitherto observed: "The substitute for this detestable liquor rum — this liquid fire — this destroyer of the souls and bodies of men — this enemy to order, family, peace, prosperity, government and liberty are" [a singularly mild list] "sweet milk and water, buttermilk and water, strong beer and water, cyder and water, wine and water, vinegar and water, and molasses and water."

The paper of September 15, 1790, contributed to the *Pennsylvania Packet*, is certainly not his, for it is signed by Agricola at Philadelphia at a date when Crèvecoeur was back in France. The subjects of this paper and of those which follow over this signature make it seem unlikely that he had anything to do with their publication.⁵⁸ A summary of them leads one to surmise that there must have been at least one other Agricola, perhaps more than one, who is responsible for the remaining papers up to the time when John Young's *Letters from Agricola* were collected

⁵⁸ Exception must be taken to a few which are re-prints from an earlier date.

in 1822.⁵⁹ It may be that the series of controversial articles in answer to those of Publicola, which appeared in July, 1791, in the *Independent Chronicle* (Boston),⁶⁰ are by the same author as those of September and October⁶¹ in the *Independent Gazetteer* (Phila). It is likely, too, that the Agricola whose letter to George Latimer came out in the same paper September 15, 1792, is the same as the 1791 Agricola of the Philadelphia paper. We may conjecture also that the writer of a little paper, in a rather facetious vein, in the *Connecticut Journal*, July 20, 1791,⁶² may be the same as the contributor to the *Salem Gazette* (Sept. 13, 1791) from Topfield, Connecticut, who sends a hoaxing conundrum to puzzle the brains of the *Gazette's* readers.

During the years that followed, up to the year 1818, when Young began to use the name of Agricola in the letters on agriculture which he contributed to a Halifax newspaper, we find from time to time reappearances of this nom-de-plume. These are noted in the list which precedes, but it does not seem worth while to discuss them singly, in view of the lack of probability of their belonging to Crèvecoeur, who was by that time far from the country. It is rather interesting, however, to notice that the paper on maple wine, maple vinegar, etc. which had appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 22, 1788, which is probably Crèvecoeur's, still seemed sufficiently valuable to re-print so late as 1805, when it appeared in the *Evening Fireside*, copied from the *New England Republican* of an earlier date. None of the other contributions which appear during these later years over the name of Agricola

⁵⁹ See Chapter X, p. 162, note 4.

⁶⁰ July 6, 9, 16.

⁶¹ September 24, October 8.

⁶² Re-printed in the *Middlesex Gazette*, July 23, 1791.

bears strong evidence of being Crèvecoeur's.⁶³ The nom-de-plume was obvious and convenient, and may have been used by a number of people from the time when Crèvecoeur surrendered it to the time when Young adopted it.⁶⁴

We may conclude from this summary that four⁶⁵ out of the forty-three Agricola papers which we have examined, included between the years 1782 and 1817, were certainly not Crèvecoeur's, and that sixteen⁶⁶ cannot with any degree of probability be assigned to him. Yet he was certainly the author of two,⁶⁷ in all likelihood the author of six⁶⁸ others, and possibly of fourteen⁶⁹ more.

REPRINTS FROM CRÈVECOEUR

- | | | |
|------------|-------|--|
| June, | 1782. | Opium eating at Nantucket; from Letter VII.
(<i>The Lady's Magazine</i>) |
| September, | 1782. | The Negro in the cage; from Letter IX.
(<i>The Hibernian Magazine</i>) |
| October, | 1782. | The battle of the snakes, and the humming-bird; from Letter X.
(<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>) |
| | 1783. | The situation, feelings and pleasures of an American Farmer; from Letter II.
(<i>New Annual Register</i>) |
| | 1783. | The history of Andrew the Hebridean; from Letter III.
(<i>New Annual Register</i>) |

⁶³ It is just possible that "The Importance of Agriculture" in the *Vermont Intelligencer and Bellows Falls Advertiser*, Nov. 3, and Dec. 22, 1817, taken from the *Raleigh Register*, is a Crèvecoeur re-print.

⁶⁴ John Young's claim to the title began in the following year.

⁶⁵ 7, 30, 38, 39.

⁶⁶ 6, 10, 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41, 42.

⁶⁷ 2, 4.

⁶⁸ 3, 8, 15, 17, 21, 24.

⁶⁹ 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 27, 28, 29, 43.

- January, 1784. The situation, feelings and pleasures of an American Farmer; from Letter II.
(*Westminster Magazine*)
- March, 1784. The battle of the snakes, and the humming-bird; from Letter X.
(*Boston Magazine*)
- April, 1784. Description of Martha's Vineyard and of whale fishery; from Letter VI.
(*Boston Magazine*)
- January, 1785. The story of the sassafras and the vine; from *Lettres d'un cultivateur américain*, 1784, I: 224-229.
(*Boston Magazine*)
- July 12, 1785. The negro in the cage; from Letter IX.
(*Maryland Journal*)
- July 30, 1785.
- August 1, 1785. The negro in the cage; from Letter IX.
(*Providence Gazette and County Journal*)
- August 1, 1785. The history of Andrew the Hebridean; from Letter III.
(*Connecticut Courant*)
- March, 1787. The negro in the cage; from Letter IX.
(*American Museum*)
- July, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*, 1787.
(*Articles of an association by the name of the Ohio Company*)
- August 1, 1787. On slavery; from Letter IX.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- September 3, 1787. On slavery; from Letter IX.
(*Middlesex Gazette*)
- October 28, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*,
(or after) (Pamphlet—*An explanation of the map which delineates that part of the Federal Lands between Pennsylvania, west line, the rivers Ohio and Scioto and Lake Erie*).
- October, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*.
(last week) (*Worcester Magazine*)

- November 1, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*.
(*New Haven Gazette*)
- November 12, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*.
(*Connecticut Courant*)
- November, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*.
(fourth week) (*Worcester Magazine*)
- November 7, 1787. Description of the Ohio country; from *Lettres*.
(*Salem Mercury*)
- December 4, 1787. Continuation of the same; from *Lettres*.
(*Salem Mercury*)
- March 15, 1788. Journey from Minisink to Wyoming; from
Lettres.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- March 26, 1788. American newspapers; from *Lettres*.
(*New Jersey Journal*)
- April 5, 1788. Anecdote of a savage dog; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:199-204.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- April 16, 1788. Sequel to the foregoing; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:204-211.
(*Massachusetts Centinel*)
- May 9, 1788. Anecdote of a savage dog; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:199-204.
American newspapers; from *Lettres*.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- May 12, 1788. Sequel to the story of the dog; from *Lettres*,
1784, I:204-211.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- May 13, 1788. Journey from Minisink to Wyoming; from
Lettres.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- May 28, 1788. Anecdote of a savage dog; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:199-211.
(*New Jersey Journal*)
- June 10, 1788. Anecdote of a savage dog; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:199-211.
(*New Brunswick Gazette*)

- June 8, 1789. On slavery; from Letter IX.
(*Boston Gazette*)
- August 14, 1790. Letter from Dr. M——r; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:255-261.
(*Pennsylvania Packet*)
- August 25, 1790. Letter from Dr. M——; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:255-261.
(*Hampshire Gazette*)
- August 30, 1790. Letter from Dr. M——r; from *Lettres*, 1784;
I:255-261.
(*American Mercury*)
- September 7, 1790. Letter from Dr. M——; from *Lettres*, 1784,
I:255-261.
(*Salem Gazette*)
- September 13, 1790. Letter from Dr. M——; from *Lettres*, 1784,
255-261.
(*Vermont Gazette*)
- January, 1791. The negro in the cage; from Letter IX.
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
- January, 1792. Distresses of a frontier man; from Letter XI.
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
- February, 1792. The situation, feelings and pleasures of an
American Farmer; from Letter II.
(*New York Magazine*)
- March, 1792. Continuation of the same; from Letter II.
(*New York Magazine*)
- October, 1792. What is an American? from Letter III.
(*Massachusetts Magazine*)
- May, 1794. Introductory letter from an American Farmer,
Letter I.
(*United States Magazine*)
- February, 1797. The history of Andrew the Hebridean; from
Letter III.
(*New York Magazine*)
- March, 1797. Continuation of the same; from Letter III.
(*New York Magazine*)

- March, 1797. The battle of the snakes, and the humming-bird; from Letter X.
(*Literary Museum*)
- April, 1797. Continuation of the story of Andrew the Hebridean; from Letter III.
(*New York Magazine*)
- May 11, 1799. Anecdote of a savage dog; from *Lettres*, 1784, I:199-211.
(*Weekly Magazine*)
- December 7, 1805. Letter from Dr. M——r; from *Lettres*, 1784, I:255-261.
(*Evening Fireside*)

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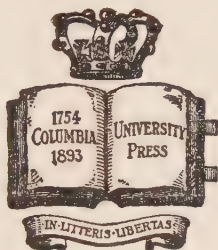
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